

If history is dead and gone

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If history is dead and gone

by [orphan_account](#)

Summary

“Don’t come any fucking closer,” Tommy shouted, startling Phil into stepping back. Tommy was still looking around wildly, like a trapped animal “Don’t fucking do it.”

In which Tommy finds himself faced with his splintered family, while it was still mostly whole. The past is not an easy place to be when the future was not kind. His family is forced to deal with the fall out.

Notes

I.... I cannot believe I'm writing this. Also this is 100% based on the characters within the SMP canon, nothing to do with the actual people. Also, I kinda just... handwaved the ages. Don't pay attention to them.

//3.22.2021- updated and edited tags.//

daylight could be so violent

Philza was having a *normal* morning. Normal was a relative term, of course, when you were the father of a moody 20-year-old genius, his (adopted) piglin hybrid twin, and their younger brother, who was a (lovable) menace, not to mention his best friend who was practically a fourth kid.

With a family like that, the house was always loud. Of course, it had quieted in some in the last few years, as kids matured and moved on (and while quiet was nice, he would lie if he said he sometimes didn't miss the noise). Technoblade was spending more and more time away from home- hell, Phil hadn't seen his eldest son in almost a year, and he hadn't written in almost a month. He was busy, off doing Ender knows what, though Phil thought he'd mentioned something about potato farming in his rare, brief letters. That was better than bloodshed, at least, he supposed.

He just hoped his son was safe. As much as he joked about Wilbur being an adult and still living at home, Phil was more than happy for his children to stay with him so that he knew they were safe and cared for. He hadn't denied Technoblade's request to leave, but he often wished his oldest hadn't left the moment he turned 16. (part of him had wanted to follow, to care for his most unstable son, but Wilbur was still just sixteen at the time and Tommy only 10. Maybe one day, when Tommy was 15 or 16 himself...)

Regardless, he was having a normal morning, for him. Phil had already tended the cows and horses, ensuring they were fed. He cleared a few trees about a mile from the house, so that the fire would stay warm and cheery, and melt the freshly fallen snow from their boots.

He'd woken Wilbur when he came in, and sent him off to do his usual chores and had spent the last hour or so cutting up potatoes, carrots, and fresh beef for the stew he was making for lunch. It wasn't much, but with the cold of early winter settling in, it would taste good and warm them up at midday, which was rapidly approaching.

Wilbur should have already been finished with his chores but was likely working on a song instead, singing to Maria, their oldest sheep. Phil didn't care, as long as he cleaned up the barn at some point.

Tommy, on the other hand, was still sleeping. Normally Phil wouldn't allow Tommy to sleep so far into the day. It was wasteful when there was always so much to do and see, but Phil felt a little guilty. He and Tommy had been out clearing trees a ways from their house the day before where they were planning to create a bee farm. Phil was lost in his work and Tommy was being helpful but was also having fun pretending to fight imaginary mobs with swords and Phil hadn't been paying enough attention. It edged a little too close to dark before they started home and the real mobs came out.

Tommy could hold his own against zombies and creepers rather well, but an Enderman, of all things, had appeared. Phil could still remember the slight squawk of fear his youngest had

made, causing Phil to turn from the baby zombie he'd just killed, only to find an Enderman looming over his youngest, shaking with rage.

Phil didn't remember much of what happened in the next few minutes. The next thing he knew, he was standing over the Enderman's fading body, his trusty netherite sword glistening in his hand, wings thrown wide as Tommy cowered behind him.

Tommy was really too heavy to carry while flying, but Phil could see he was shaking, and damn it, his son had almost died, right in front of him, Phil wasn't sure if his hands or Tommy's were shaking worse as they clung to one another on the flight home.

The 14-year-old pretended he wasn't scared when they got back. He told Wilbur that he was a 'big man' and that he'd almost had the Enderman down when Phil stole his kill. Phil hadn't called him out on it and Wilbur hadn't either after a stern look from Phil. They would play along, but Phil knew Tommy was far more shaken than he was willing to admit. Tommy hadn't strayed more than a few feet from him or Wilbur the night before. Phil couldn't help the cool guilt that pooled in his stomach at the idea that his son nearly died because of his own negligence. Tommy acted so brave Phil often forgot he was nearly 8 years younger than his siblings, with far less experience than them. So, he let Tommy sleep.

But, it was approaching noon and Tommy needed to get up, at least to eat. Perhaps Phil would send Wilbur over to fetch Tubbo- the boy was probably all alone in that house anyway. Tubbo's father was dead and his mother hardly counted as such- Tubbo spent more time at their house than at his own. Phil didn't mind, especially since the quiet boy could be such a good influence on Tommy. Well, when Tommy wasn't being a bad influence on him.

So Phil allowed the soup to simmer over the fire as he rose up on his feet. His knees twinged a little, stiff after kneeling for so long. Phil certainly wasn't old, by any means, especially not by hybrid standards, but his body had taken quite a bit of abuse over the last 20 years of fatherhood.

Phil trudged up the steps to the second floor where all of his son's bedrooms were. Tommy's was at the end of the hall and the door was cracked open just enough that Phil could see a small tuft of blonde hair peeking out from under the blankets. He smiled softly. Tommy looked peaceful like that, unlike he did any time he was awake. Phil loved his youngest, but Tommy could be a right menace, especially now that he'd just caught on to swear words. He just... needed a little guidance.

Tommy was usually a heavy sleeper and it sometimes required Phil to practically drag him from bed. If he ever let Technoblade or Wilbur wake Tommy up, there was often water involved. He expected today to be much the same, especially since it had been on into the night before Tommy dozed off on the couch, and Wilbur had carried him up to his bed and tucked him in. Tommy would have protested if he hadn't been so soundly asleep.

Phil, however, only had to open the door and take a single step in for Tommy to wake up. Tommy shot straight up in bed, looking around wildly before his eyes finally landed on Phil. The look on Tommy's face froze Phil for a moment. Tommy's bright blue eyes were wild and blown wide with what looked like sheer terror. His breathing was unsteady and gasping. Tommy was terrified. Phil's heart wrenched.

“No,” Tommy murmured shaking his head slightly, though he had yet to look away from Phil, “oh fuck no. Oh no. Oh shit.”

That snapped Phil out of his trance. Tommy was terrified- probably still trapped in a nightmare about the Enderman. He couldn't be seeing his room and certainly wasn't seeing Phil. Tommy was trapped in a nightmare and Phil was stuck watching on the outside.

“Tommy,” Phil said softly, taking a step towards his son, hand out, ready to pull him into a hug “Tommy, it's-”

Tommy flinched back violently, pressing against the wall “Don't come any fucking closer.” Tommy shouted suddenly, startling Phil into stepping back. Tommy was still looking around wildly, like a trapped animal “Don't fucking do it.”

Tommy had already started picking up curse words from Wilbur and Techno, but the absolute filth spilling from his mouth was unusual even for him. But Tommy was obviously scared, so Phil didn't try to press closer.

“Tommy what-”

Tommy paled even further, completely ignoring Phil's words as he started to ramble loudly “Oh Ender, if you're here, Technoblade isn't far behind. Or are you supposed to bring me to him? I'm not going. I-I won't let you take me Philza- I-I'll fucking kill you.” Tommy's eyes wandered back to Phil who was frozen on the spot. There was rage intermingled in that fear. What was his son seeing? What was his son thinking?

“ I won't hesitate.” Tommy spat. He pulled his weak wooden sword out of his inventory- he must not have taken it out last night. Phil thought distantly, that he would normally admonish Tommy for that, because it could be dangerous, waking up and being able to pull out a weapon. But Tommy seemed to know exactly what he was doing, with that sword, pointed with an eerily steady hand at Phil “ I-I don't want to but I will! I need to get out of here. Fuck I'm in deep shit. He is going to fucking kill me, he's going to kill me or send me to-” Tommy made a choked noise that sounded like sheer panic, and Phil's stomach twisted in fear for his son. Something was wrong.

Phil wasn't sure if Tommy was talking to him or just himself, but regardless, what he was saying made no sense. Tommy hadn't seen his older brother in nearly a year, and not regularly for 4. They two had been close when Tommy was little but Techno couldn't always handle him, especially not on bad days, when the chat was too loud. But nothing, nothing should have garnered this reaction. What sort of nightmare had he had?

“Tommy, please, calm-”

Tommy, however, didn't seem to hear him, or maybe just didn't care. Phil wasn't sure what Tommy was even seeing. Before Phil could react Tommy was out of bed and vaulting across the small room. It took a moment to realize what he was doing, but by then it was too late. Phil dove for him, desperately trying to grab his son, but his hands only brushed the back of Tommy's shirt. Phil gaped in horror as his son crashed through the glass panes of the window, breaking it with only his body. Phil scrambled to his feet, from where he'd crashed to the floor, and ran to the small window. “Tommy!” he shouted out into the cold morning air

as ice spread up his spine, but he only caught a glimpse of blonde vanishing into the dense wood that sprawled around their house.

The window wasn't big enough for Phil to fly out of and he cursed that design flaw as he ran down the steps. He paused only long enough to pull on his boots and stormed out the door. Every second wasted was a second that Tommy was doing Ender knows what. Every second was one more towards nightfall. Phil's hands didn't shake, but it was only years of fighting that kept them steady.

"Dad?" Wilbur was just outside the door, guitar in hand "I heard a crash. Is everything ok?"

"Tommy's gone," Phil said shortly, trying not to let the cold panic that clutched at his heart seep into his voice. He needed to keep a level head, for Tommy and for Wilbur. He needed Wilbur to keep it together. He needed his eyes. "I went to wake him up and he panicked, talking out of his head. He jumped out the window before I realized what he was even doing."

"What? Out the window? Is he okay?" Wilbur asked, concern leaking into his tone "Why-"

"Will, I don't know." He snapped "I need you to help me find him. I'm taking to the sky, I need you on the ground. Tommy went north- try and follow his tracks. Take a sword and be careful. Signal me if you find him or if you need me."

Wilbur looked panicked but Phil didn't have time to coddle him, not now, not when it was cold, snowing, and inching towards nightfall. Tommy would never last all night against the mobs, not with only a wooden sword. . He simply clapped a hand on Will's shoulder and said "Be careful, son." Then he unfurled his dark wings and took off into the skies.

Tommy was running. He had no fucking clue what else he could do. His weapons were gone. His armour was gone. Even his food, his meagre potatoes, and bread were taken. He had nothing but the stupid wooden sword that he didn't even remember making, let alone why he would clear his inventory for it. Phil had probably fucking taken it.

All he knew was that he was in a strange room, with his dad, no Philza standing over him. And wasn't that just fucking great? Phil was almost as bad as Technoblade, if not worse in the whole 'hating his guts' thing. He didn't know if Phil would kill him or not, but the only reason that Phil would be anywhere near him these days would be if Technoblade asked him to. And after everything that happened, well, Techno would want nothing more than to run Tommy through with a sword. He made that clear the day he blew up L'Manburg. He knew that even before he'd betrayed Technoblade.

Tommy thought he was relatively safe where he was, despite 90% of the SMP hating him, he was almost certain Phil and Techno hadn't been hunting him. But, apparently, he was wrong. He must've wandered too far into the woods, (though he couldn't really remember anything from the last few days) and wandered into Philza's fucking hut.

He had vaguely recognized the house, but couldn't place it. He hadn't exactly studied it either, not when he woke up to Philza standing over him. No, there was only time to try and get the fuck out, like every instinct was screaming at him to do.

The landscape he wasn't as far north as Techno's farm, but there was still snow on the ground and a chill in the air. He thought he'd been there before but again-he only had time to run- he couldn't be bothered to study the fucking tress. Besides, Tommy couldn't focus. His head ached almost as much as his body and everything was... fuzzy. Wrong. He just needed to get away. He had to fucking hide, before Phil could find him. Tommy, despite what people thought, really didn't want to die.

His inventory was pitiful, but he had a wooden sword and an old pickax. That would be enough to create a dugout and a few small torches. IT wasn't much but it was enough to survive the night. It had to be.

Tommy wasn't sure how far he'd gotten but it probably wasn't far enough, especially if Phil got desperate enough to take to the skies. He didn't know if he would risk Dream's wrath by flying though. But, his feet ached and despite how much he'd run recently, he was already winded. His sides ached and his legs struggled to keep under him. How was he so out of shape?

Tommy finally had to stop. He didn't want to. He would die if he did, at the hands of Phil or Techno, but if he kept going the snow would get him first. Maybe Techno Would make it quick? His aching body wouldn't let him go another step as it stood- not if he wanted a shelter.

. Tommy forced himself to stay upright, as he stumbled against the side of a rock wall. Something about it was familiar, like everything else, but Tommy wasn't sure what. He didn't care. The area wasn't ideal but he couldn't bring himself to try and craft. He swung his pickaxe, forcing his shaking arms to dig a shallow dugout on the side of the rock wall. It was tiny, only a few blocks wide and two tall, but it was enough. It would keep the zombies out. He lit one of his torches and rebuilt the wall. He hated staring at the blank stone wall in front of him, too much like Pogtopia and all those weeks without sunlight, but he couldn't afford to be caught. And he was tired. He was so fucking tired.

Tommy shivered against the cold stone rock wall. He needed to stay awake, just in case Phil managed to find his hideout, needed to be ready to fight, but he was cold. And tired, and everything felt wrong. Tommy was sure that he could figure it out if only he could focus, but everything was fuzzy and fading fast.

Maybe a nap would help, Tommy thought distantly, a nap sounded nice.

some sign of life

Chapter Notes

Uhh, another 1 am update. oops. To be honest this may have typos. I don't think so but after the amount of time I've stared at this, I'm not sure.

Also, how have I gotten more kudos and hits on this fic in 48 hours than I have on my other most popular fic (on my real account) that's been up for nearly a year. Wild. I am loving all the feedback though! Please let me know what you think! Also, sorry if this is a bit filler-ish, ut it moved the plot. The next chapter should feature more on Tommy himself and even more angst.

Enjoy please!

Wilbur wasn't panicking.

Wilbur Soot didn't panic. He was a rational adult, who had a well-stocked inventory, excellent tracking skills, and decent enough skills with the diamond sword that hung at his hip. He was hunting his 14-year-old brother, who had practically no inventory and years less experience with survival. Wilbur knew Tommy like the back of his hand- it shouldn't be hard to find him, especially not when their Dad was looking too.

Panic, like Dad always said, never helped anyone. Keeping a clear mind did. So Wilbur was certain that it was just a symptom of the cold, that caused his hands to shake as he trudged through the snow, straining to see Tommy's fast-fading footsteps, as more snow blew in and the dark drew nearer.

The dark meant mobs. Wilbur wasn't particularly scared of them, not himself. He could take almost anything (except an enderman) even without his armour. Probably, But Tommy was just a kid, with no armour, no shoes, and at best his wooden sword that was only marginally better than a training sword. Loud, reckless Tommy, who was so stupid, yet so smart, who could be halfway to anywhere-

Wilbur forced himself to stop that train of thought. He couldn't panic. Wouldn't. Not even as the tracks he'd been searching for desperately had vanished completely under the rising layers of snow. It was too dark and too snowy to really track Tommy. Wilbur swallowed hard past the lump in his throat

"Tommy" Wilbur called, "Tommy, where are you?"

He didn't really think it would work, not when Phil said Tommy was out of his mind, but Wilbur didn't really have any other ideas, and giving up wasn't an option. "Tommy!" he

shouted again and waited a moment, straining to hear anything that could be his brother. Nothing. Wilbur pulled his coat tighter and moved on.

“Tommy!”

Wilbur had lost track of the exact time, in the dim woods, but based on the light he could see, it had to be near sunset, meaning he'd been scouring the woods for nearly four hours, and was no close to finding Tommy. The snow had completely erased his tracks and so far, Wilbur had seen no signs of downed trees or carved out rocks, but with the rocky hills rising on each side it was hard to see everything.

Wilbur had stopped calling for Tommy, mostly just listening, because he doubted Tommy could even hear him/ Not to mention, Wilbur couldn't shout anymore, even breathing hurt as the cold air bit at his raw throat. His legs ached from the cold and the steep terrain, but he kept going. Tommy was out here, somewhere. And when Wilbur found him and made sure he was safe, he would kick his ass, for pulling this stunt.

How stupid could Tommy be, running off into the woods? Going against everything they'd ever been taught? What was he thinking? But according to Dad, Tommy hadn't been thinking, he'd been seeing things.

Wilbur had no idea what he was seeing- what he could still be seeing. And if reality was falling away... Wilbur clenched his shaky hands. HE couldn't afford to think like that. He needed to focus on looking for Tommy.

Wilbur thought he was still following Tommy's footsteps, but it was more along the lines of a faint indention in the snow, winding through the trees. Honestly, it could have been made by a fox, but.... That simply wasn't an option. This had to be Tommy's trail.

But the snow was still falling fast and the thick canopy of trees hung overhead, minimizing the light further. Wilbur tried not to think of what would happen once the sun slipped behind the horizon. Tommy would be alone. He hoped that he might have at least found shelter. Wilbur would have to stop soon and do the same.

He was a useless fighter, especially at night. He could take a few zombies normally, but when his had s ached from the cold and exhaustion was already sitting heavy on his shoulders... Wilbur was no Technoblade (not that he had ever been allowed to forget that). He would have to stop looking for Tommy. Useless.

He'd be more useless dead, though.

He trekked on for a few minutes, but night was falling. He needed shelter. Wilbur forced himself to tear his gaze away from the footsteps he was hoping were in the snow to survey his surroundings and he landed a rocky outcropping to his left that was a little too small to be a mountain, considering it for the night's rest. A dirt shack on top would suffice until morning could come.

A flicker of... something caught Wilbur's eye. He wasn't sure what it was- not an animal- but something was on that outcropping. He squinted, staring up at the rocky expanse when finally, it caught his eye. It was the flicker of a torch.

Well, it was a rock wall, hastily thrown up, with a large enough gap for a little light to come out. Someone, someone was in that rock wall.

Wilbur suddenly wasn't tired. He sprinted to the outcropping, sheathing his sword as he scrambled up the uneven rocks that littered the side as fast as he could. Some of the rocks seemed to have been placed by someone else trying to climb up, away from the cold ground. His heart thundered in his chest as he came to a gasping stop on the ledge by the shoddy wall.

Wilbur went for his pickaxe but hesitated. This... wasn't necessarily Tommy. It could be a stranger. And even if it was Tommy... would he even know Wilbur? If he didn't know their Dad...

Wilbur heard a soft twang and before he could react, something hit his shoulder with enough force that he stumbled forward. Somewhere below him, there was the telltale clang of bones. Skeleton, a distant part of his brain supplied a skeleton was shooting at him.

But, that part was overshadowed by the blistering pain blooming in his shoulder, which felt like it had been set on fire. A scream ripped its way out of Wilbur's raw throat as he fell heavily against the wall, narrowly avoiding an arrow aimed at his head.

He needed to get behind the wall before the skeleton killed him.

He pulled out his pickaxe and forced himself to swing it, even as he screamed through gritted teeth at the pain burning in his right shoulder. The wall collapsed and Wilbur practically tumbled in. Another arrow embedded itself beside Wilbur's ear. It was halfway up the embankment and Wilbur, even over the thundering of his heart could hear the moans of a zombie. Wilbur allowed the pickaxe to drop as he picked up the rock. His arms shook violently as he heaved the rock back in place.

It wasn't much but it would hold for a moment. Wilbur slid to the ground sitting down heavily, looking in for the first time.

The pain made it hard to focus, but it couldn't stop the sheer relief that flooded his system when he saw Tommy curled in the corner, chest rising and falling. Had he not been on the floor, Wilbur would have collapsed. Tommy was alive. A sob ripped its way out of Wilbur's chest, somewhere between pain and sweet relief.

With shaky hands, Wilbur reached into his inventory to see what he had with him. He only had one potion and nothing else. He hadn't bothered to take any that morning and in the panic after, he hadn't thought to grab anything else. Stupid. Wilbur's gaze wandered over to his brother. Tommy was still breathing, but the rise and fall of his chest was too shallow, Wilbur could see that through even the haze of pain. He would go to him, but first...

With his left hand, he grabbed the arrow as close to his throbbing shoulder as he dared. He took a deep breath and used all the force he could muster to snap the arrow. He screamed into his hat as his vision whited out for a moment. Every nerve in his body felt like it was on fire. The cold floor of the cave was gone, replaced by just pain, from every angle. Then, for a moment there was nothing. The pain eased, finally, and Wilbur's vision finally cleared. The end of the shaft was on the ground beside him, apparently dropped at some point. Ender, that hurt like a bitch.

He'd never been really shot before and hoped to never be again.

Wilbur looked at the quarter filled potion bottle sitting beside him. His shoulder ached and the blood had already seeped through his coat, he could feel the stickiness on his fingers. He attempted to wipe it on his shirt before grabbing the potion. Even drinking all of it wouldn't heal him, but it would stop the worst of the bleeding.

He fumbled with the cork- his fingers were still numb and the pain only made the tremors running through his hands worse. He managed to get it off and brought the vial up to his chapped lips. Wilbur took a swig, allowing the cool blue liquid to trickle down his throat. The effect wasn't much but it was nearly instant. The pain in his shoulder eased slightly, from white-hot to a slightly duller throb. His head cleared slightly, and he studied the bottle, before drinking the rest of it. The pain didn't change much, but he could feel the blood flow slow to a trickle, then nearly stop. It wasn't anywhere near healed- that would just take time and a better medic than Wilbur, but it was functional. Now, Tommy. The kid hadn't stirred once since Wilbur had busted in. Something cold twisted in Wilbur's gut.

Wilbur forced himself to his feet- steadier than he'd been earlier, but still far from stable- and shuffled to where Tommy was curled up in the corner, wooden sword resting by his side. He was shivering violently, Wilbur could see that now that he was so close. Wilbur gently grabbed Tommy's arm. Tommy didn't stir but Wilbur's heart dropped at how cold Tommy felt.

That... was not good.

Wilbur frowned. He didn't have the stuff to build a big fire- besides that wouldn't be safe in such a small room- and no healing potions. He studied Tommy's outfit- it was just a plain t-shirt and jeans. He didn't even have on shoes.

Wilbur shrugged his good shoulder out of his coat, before trying to gently pull it off the other side. The fabric caught on the stub or arrow still lodged into his shoulder and for a moment, everything was blank again as white-hot pain ran through Wilbur's body.

Ender, that hurt. He panted for a moment as the pain faded a bit, then forced the jacket the rest of the way off. Wilbur was taller than Tommy, to the point that when he draped the bloody coat over him, it practically swallowed him.

It wasn't much, but it would have to suffice.

Wilbur lowered himself down onto the ground, allowing his head to rest against the cold wall, trying to avoid moving his shoulder. He had no idea what time it was, or how long he'd been blacked out, but morning would come soon enough. The mobs he could hear outside would be gone, and he could figure out where he was, and how to get both of them home.

Philza had spent the night on the ground, fighting off mobs and attempting to track Wilbur's footsteps. He'd long given up on his attempt to follow Tommy through the tree- he would have to be on the ground to try and catch up with Wilbur. But, he hadn't even managed that

and spent the night fending off mobs, hoping that his sons were safe. By morning, the mobs had left enough tracks that Phil had no idea what belonged to Wilbur or a zombie.

Fear couldn't touch what he was feeling.

Phil wasn't sure what the best choice would be. He could check the house- Perhaps Tommy had gotten back, and was in the house. Perhaps both kids were there and he'd get to chew them out for not signaling him, or using their-

Phil flinched in surprise as he heard something explode off in the distance. It didn't sound like a creeper or TNT, but rather fireworks. In a server that rarely had communication lines working, that was their signal. It had to be Wilbur.

He used his axe to slice through the trees above him, and took off straight up, flapping his aching wings. He could see the smoke fading off in the distance and flew frantically, eyes locked on the fading smoke. Soon enough, he could see the small form of Wilbur standing on top of a rocky hill and something eased slightly in his chest, with proof that at least one of his sons was still alive.

"Did you find him?" The words were tumbling out of Phil's mouth before his feet hit even the ground.

"Yes." Wilbur said and nodded towards the rock face below "He dug himself a little hole in there last night, it seems."

Phil let out a deep sigh and forced himself to stay upright. His knees were weak with relief. "Is he alright?"

Wilbur hesitated, then attempted to shrug. It was at that point Phil noticed the bloodstain on Wilbur's shirt. His stomach twisted, at that he hadn't already noticed the frankly large stain on Wilbur's grey sweater "Wil. are you, alright son? What happened?"

Wilbur shook his head "I'm fine. Skeleton clipped me with an arrow. WE can deal with it later. Tommy... Tommy doesn't look like he has any injuries but I think he might be hypothermic." Phil could hear the fear in Wilbur's voice- he could feel that same cold panic still banded around its heart. It hadn't really let go in nearly two days, not since that ender-damned enderman attack.

"Alright, Well we need to get him home. Luckily, Tommy managed to make almost a circle. If we can get to the other side of that mountain, we'll be only a mile from home. You can't see it from here, though" Phil said as he pointed in the general direction of their home. It was pure luck that Tommy had somehow managed to double back as much as he did. Though, it was somehow even more worrying that Tommy, who spent hours in these very woods, hadn't realized his surroundings.

The trip still wouldn't be easy- especially since Wilbur wouldn't be able to help support Tommy. Tommy wasn't particularly heavy, but he was already taller than Phil himself and lanky. But, Phil would carry him every step of the way if he had to. There was no other option.

“Let’s get going.” Wilbur said “I don't want to spend another night out here. And I don’t think Tommy could take it.”

Phil swallowed down his worry, once again. He’d have time to worry about it after everyone was safe and home. “Alright son, let’s do it.”

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Two gruelling hours later, their cabin came into sight. Phil had never been quite so relieved to see the structure he’d built nearly three decades ago.

Tommy had remained completely unresponsive the whole trek, and Philza was forced to carry him. Between that and Wilbur’s injury (which Phil suspected was far worse than Wil was letting on) it had taken them hours to transverse something that might have only taken them thirty minutes normally.

It was agony, knowing that Phil was so close to home, but that there was nothing he could truly do for his sons until he got them home and got them warm. Especially Tommy. He tried to keep it together for Wilbur, but something was seriously wrong with Tommy. He shouldn’t have gotten hypothermia so fast and should have at least shown some response to touch. But there was nothing.

That, however, was not defeat. Phil had travelled many places and had many items. If he had to force-feed Tommy all the golden apples he had, then so be it.

“Come on Wilbur.” He called to his son, who was straggling behind him. “ we’re almost home.”

Phil would be damned if the cold took Tommy's first life.

I feel like I might fade into the dawn

Chapter Summary

Tommy is lost in his own head. Philza tries to deal with it.

Chapter Notes

Chapter 3. This is like, all angst. There is nothing happy here tbh. Sorry. Also, this is, if you didn't know, a weird mashup of Minecraft and real-life rules. There is no real rhyme or reason to what I choose lol. Please enjoy, I promise that Tommy will wake up and there will be comfort with the hurt eventually.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy was nine and sitting on an oak tree branch just above Wilbur's head. Tommy remembered that day. They were supposed to be doing... something. Maybe mining, just on the edges of the cave, or harvesting flowers for dye. It was springtime and finally getting warm enough that he didn't have to wear the stupid coat that either Wilbur, Techno, or Dad forced him into. Coats were boring, and Techno didn't have to wear one. Whatever. He didn't have to wear one for chores today. Whatever those were supposed to be.

Tommy honestly hadn't paid attention at the time and Wilbur had snuck his guitar out of the house. Besides, listening to Wilbur play was way more interesting than doing any chores, except maybe cutting down trees, which Tommy wasn't allowed to do yet. lame.

Of course, listening to Wilbur play was only because he didn't have anything else better to do. Their dad had taken the training sword he'd managed to craft (also lame, or as he'd heard Wilbur say, fucking stupid.) and the animals he'd tried to play with all ran away. Since they were so far from the house, he wasn't allowed out of Wilbur's sight and after he nearly fell down a ravine, he wasn't allowed out of the tree either, despite his protests. So, Wilbur's music was his only source of entertainment.

And Wilbur wasn't bad. But even as nice as the last fifteen minutes had been, sitting there listening to birds and Wilbur's guitar, Tommy wanted Wilbur to really play, not just strum.

“Play something more interesting,” Tommy whined, unable to take it any longer. He slid down so that he was dangling upside down from the branch, legs hooked over the thick branch.

Wilbur was facing the other direction, but Tommy heard him groan “I was concentrating Tommy. You made me lose the melody damn it.”

Tommy made a face, sticking his tongue out. It felt weird, hanging upside down “Well, it was a boring melody. Play a fun song!” Tommy’s head hurt so he pulled himself back up “Not a lame new melody.”

“No Tommy, I’m not going to play a fun song,” Wilbur said, turning to face him. Tommy nearly fell out of the tree. Wilbur was suddenly wearing the dark, tattered coat from the days of Pogtopia and deep bags hung under his eyes.

Suddenly Wilbur grabbed Tommy’s leg and yanked hard, pulling him out of the tree. Tommy screeched in surprise and pain as he landed harshly on the ground. “Wilbur, wait-”

“You never are happy with anything, are you?” Wilbur hissed, getting right up in Tommy’s face “Never satisfied, always wanting more, more, more. Never caring about anyone but Tommy. It was always about what you wanted.”

Tommy tried to scramble back, but Wilbur simply yanked him back and pinned him to the ground. “No, wait, please.” Tommy begged “I-”

“You know, I was glad when Phil killed me.” Wilbur’s voice was dripping with distaste and his brown eyes burned with insanity like they had the day of the festival. He was pale and his hands were ice cold. “Not just because L’Manburg was gone, no I could still hear your stupid fucking

voice, screaming outside. I couldn’t bear to live one more enderdamned minute with you. I wanted to die, rather than spend another minute alive with you.”

“No, please, stop, please. That isn’t true, that isn’t true, it-” Tommy begged, still struggling beneath his iron grip “I’m sorry, please, Wil-.”

“You’re not sorry,” Wilbur said, practically shouting now. “You’re never sorry. You’re only sorry you face consequences. And now that I’m here, I’m going to make sure that no one ever has to deal with your selfish, stupid, idiocy again.”

Tommy tried to scream, but Wilbur’s icy hands wrapped around his neck, and suddenly Tommy was drowning from the inside out, water bubbling up in his lungs. He tried to claw the icy hands from him, tried to cough the liquid out but it just seemed to keep coming, keep rising, icy grip locked around his neck. Wilbur’s eyes, brown and blazing burned straight through him with nothing but rage.

Tommy coughed and choked, desperately trying to draw a breath into his lungs, but there was nothing but pain, and the sound of Wilbur’s maniacal laughter above him.

Then, there was nothing.

With a strangled noise, Tommy suddenly went slack under Philza’s grip. Phil let out a deep sigh, only partially in relief as he released his hold on Tommy, gently laying him back onto the bed. He’d been trying to get a healing potion down Tommy’s throat, but Tommy had fought him every moment of the way.

“Dad?” Wilbur murmured, appearing in the door, looking a little dazed, “What happened?”

It was the middle of the night- Phil wasn’t sure what time exactly- and Wilbur had been sleeping since the afternoon before, once his shoulder wound had been taken care of. Phil had dozed, sleeping fitfully in chairs, mostly attending to his sons.

Tommy's screams must have woken him up. It would be hard not to. Phil wasn't sure if he would ever get the sounds of his son's absolutely panicked screams out of his head. Tommy was far from coherent but Phil could hear the half sobs, half screams echoing in his mind. "No, please, stop, please."

"I had to give Tommy a healing potion. Seems he's recovered enough to try and fight me, even unconsciously." Phil said, forcing his voice to be lighter than it felt. Wilbur didn't need to know exactly what happened. He didn't need to know that Tommy hadn't just been begging for mercy, he'd been begging Wilbur to stop. "Just go back to sleep son."

"I'm not tired," Wilbur lied. Phil could see the exhaustion in Wilbur's eyes and the slump of his good shoulder. "I want to stay up."

Wilbur was also stubborn, unfortunately, and Phil could see the certainty set in his jaw. "Alright, son," Phil said, slowly rising from the edge of Tommy's bed. "I just gave him the potion, so he can't have any more until tomorrow. Just sit with him, but be careful. He's still out of his head. If anything happens, come get me."

Wilbur nodded quietly, settling into the chair beside Tommy's bed. He pulled the quilt off the floor where it had fallen during Tommy's struggle. Phil let his gaze linger a moment before pulling the door halfway closed. Normally Phil would sleep downstairs in the small bedroom by the door, but that was too far away from Tommy and Wilbur if something went wrong. He settled instead for dragging a chair from Wilbur's room into the hallway. He settled down into the soft chair and allowed his eyes to close for just a moment, as he listened to Tommy's uneven rasps and Wilbur's light breathing from the other side of the wall.

When Tommy emerged from the darkness, he was ten. He was out in the woods again, his favorite ones that rested just south of the house, with tall trees and flower beds. This time Tommy was hiding behind one of the big trees, tucked into the base of the tree, trying to breathe quietly.

Mid Morning sunlight filtered down through the leaves, casting a nice

He strained, listening for the telltale sound of footsteps. He was playing hide and seek with his brothers and Tubbo. He wasn't sure who was seeking.

“Tommy,” a voice floated down, coming from a direction Tommy could quite pick out “Come out, come out, wherever you are.”

Tommy pressed against the tree further, trying to make himself small. That wasn't Wilbur's voice and certainly wasn't Tubbo. It was like the sound of a sword dragging against a whetstone. It was ice pellets falling from the sky, digging into his skin. It was the voice of someone who'd tried to kill him.

“Tommy,” The voice called again, now much, much closer, and much much scarier. “Tommy, I know you're there.” Technoblade “You're useless at hiding, why even try?”

Tommy squeezed his eyes shut, praying that Technoblade was bluffing (The Blade was never bluffing) and then there was hot breath on his neck.

“Run”

Tommy ran the echo of Technoblade's laughter on his heels.

“Dad.” Philza's head jerked up, startling him from the fire he'd been kindling downstairs. It had died earlier when Phil had accidentally fallen asleep at the kitchen table after cleaning up the stew.

“Is something wrong, son?” Phil asked. Had Tommy gotten worse? Had Tommy woken up? He couldn't hear any screaming. “What time is it?”

“It's almost midnight, I think.” Wilbur averted his gaze “I... I accidentally dozed off a few hours ago.”

“It's alright,” Phil said, finally relaxing “Is Tommy...”

“Still unconscious.” Wilbur said, and Phil couldn’t help but frown “he... he hasn’t screamed since this morning when you were up there, but he’s still burning up with a fever, and he keeps muttering under his breath but I can’t tell what he’s saying.”

Phil’s frown deepened. Two days since they’d been home, and Tommy had gone from freezing to burning up sometime in the first night and his fever hadn’t broken since, even with the full healing potion that Phil had forced down his throat the first night

“Well, at least he isn’t hurting himself.” Or trying to hurt someone else. Phil had long scratches down his arm from earlier, when he’d been forced to restrain Tommy when he’d fallen into another one of his mind terrors. “If you don’t mind sitting with him for a few more minutes I’ll go fix something for us to eat. Then you can get some real rest.”

Wilbur nodded. “Alright, I can do that.” Wilbur shuffled back towards the stairs and Phil felt his shoulders slump. He hadn’t expected Tommy’s fever to break, but he supposed it was a hope. Tommy’s fever needed to break. Tommy needed to get better, but it seemed like every day he got worse instead. His breathing seemed to get more labored and earlier Phil had heard a terrible rattle in Tommy’s chest. He hadn’t pointed it out to Wilbur, trying not to worry him. Wilbur alternated between vanishing into thin air, when Tommy’s screams got too loud and hovering at Tommy’s bedside, trying to bring his fever down.

He and Wilbur, especially Wilbur who was still recovering from the wound in his shoulder, needed food, though. They couldn’t help Tommy if they were passed out.

He grimaced as he stood, wings twinging at the movement. Phil had only spent a few hours in an actual bed the last few days, and chairs were not kind to his wings, especially not after the amount of abuse they’d taken prior.

He rummaged through his kitchen chest, looking for something simple. There wasn’t much in there, Phil noticed, he’d have to go into the storage beneath the house, the main one, filled with chest after chest of random things. Bread of course wouldn’t keep, but dried meat and vegetables did and Phil had saved plenty over the years. He’d have to go bring some up later.

He took a loaf of bread and some dried meat, making sandwiches for both himself and Wilbur. It wasn't much but it would do.

Phil hesitated as he looked around the kitchen. It wasn't safe to give Tommy another healing potion so soon after the last one, even though it had been two days since the first dose. He'd seen first hand the effects of too much magic on a human's body.

It wasn't pretty. Their wound had healed, sure, but there was too much magic in their system for their human body to handle. They'd burnt up from the inside out within 12 hours, screaming in agony, even as their skin stayed pristine and perfect. His boys knew the dangers. He'd made sure that if nothing else, they never had too many options.

Golden Apples were somewhat better but dangerously addictive. Phil himself hadn't touched a golden apple in nearly 20 years, not since Wilbur had come into his life, followed shortly by Technoblade. They worked wonders and wouldn't kill you, not outright anyway. But they certainly lowered your inhibition and lowered your senses. Phil kept a single stack, tucked away in his enderchest, that he collected over the years.

He wasn't that desperate yet, though. The last thing they needed was Tommy recovering from... whatever this was, only to immediately be forced into withdrawal. Withdrawals weren't pretty- Phil knew that far more intimately than he wished.

Maybe after he and Wilbur ate, he could scrounge up enough for a light broth to force Tommy to eat. It wasn't fun but Tommy had to eat, had to keep his health up.

Phi put the two sandwiches on a plate and sighed as he stared out his kitchen window at the pale moon over the trees. This... wasn't good. Philza had seen hypothermia before, many times. He'd had it himself, though as a hybrid, it worked a little differently but had been everywhere and seen everything. Tommy, despite the amount of time he was in the cold, shouldn't have been so sick, should he? Not to mention the screaming.

That wasn't a nightmare- Phil knew nightmare. He'd found all of his sons in the middle of the night as they sobbed from nightmares and offered them the comfort he could. This was not what nightmares looked like for Tommy.

This was something different.

Tommy was not related to Technoblade by blood, but they had no idea who Tommy's family was. He appeared human, but Philza really had no clue. He'd never worried before, but...

Technoblade had always heard the 'Chat' as he called it, but the voices hadn't turned extremely violent until he turned nine.(Until Phil took him back into the nether for the first time). Those first few weeks, when the voices got louder had been terrible. Phil could still hear Technoblade's sobs as he begged them to stop. Techno had spent nearly three days in a half-conscious state. It wasn't the same thing, but there were enough similarities that Phil was forced to consider the question:

What if Tommy was the same somehow?

What if something had been unlocked in Tommy's mind that no one else could hear or see?

Phil reached for his emergency communicator.

Tommy was still running. He wasn't sure why anymore. It was just darkness. His chest burned so badly he could hardly draw a breath. His body ached, but he still had to run. If he ever stopped, ever rested, it was only a matter of time until hands were on him, grabbing him, pulling him, trying to get him.

Tommy ran.

On a server far, far away, the winner of the potato wars and rising blood god woke up to the voices in his head screaming.

“Chat,” he muttered groggily “Chat. Please, stop screaming. I’m tryin’ to sleep. What’s wrong.”

They were screaming, to the point, Technoblade could hardly see straight in the dim light of his house. For once they didn’t seem to be screaming for blood, (not most of them, anyhow) but they just seemed to be screaming, each individual voice with their own call.

He didn’t seem to be in danger- the Chat was always more coordinated then- so he wasn't sure what was happening. “Please,” he groaned ”Please, I don’t know what you want.”

There was a swell of noise so bad that he dug his nails tightly into his scalp before it died back to a far more manageable level.

The general consensus, barring those calling for blood or potatoes, was that he had received a message from Phil. “Mail doesn’t run at night Chat” Techno countered. Phil’s latest letter couldn’t be here- he’d checked the day before.

He winced as the voices swelled again, all shouting at him to check in his communicator, which made no sense. It was practically impossible to get a cross-server message out of the one Phil lived in. Nonetheless, Chat was insistent so he reached for the small device laying beside his bed.

Techno froze, when sure enough, a message from Philza was flashing on his screen. Tendrils of cold fear crawled up his spine and only years of training kept his hands steady. The price of one of these messages was astronomical. If Phil had deemed it necessary... Technoblade wished that the voices would shut up. Everyone was fine.

Techno opened the message and read it once, then again, then a third time, just to be sure he was reading it correctly.

“Tommy is sick. He might be like you. Come home. We need you.”

That was it. No context, no further information. What could Phil mean, Tommy was like him? Tommy was *human* . Tommy was just a kid. Chat screamed.

Technoblade was long gone by the time the morning sun rose.

Chapter End Notes

Technoblade has entered the Chat.

(if it wasn't clear, Tommy is struggling more due to the fact he time travel. It weakened him so he was more susceptible to illness.)

I am loving the comments and feedback! If you have something to say, say it!

fire, help me forget

Chapter Summary

“Tommy, come on,” Tubbo said, laughing like he was telling a joke. “This is all in your head. Sometimes you think too much. I mean, not always. You could think some of your decisions through a little more sometimes, you know?”

Tommy wakes up and Tubbo makes an appearance.

Chapter Notes

I'm not well. I wrote this in under 24 hours. send help.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

TommyInnit tried to swim in lava .

The darkness took him again, after whoever was chasing him (Technoblade? Dream? Philza? He couldn't remember) chased him all the way into the nether. He hadn't seen their face, but whoever it was- whatever it was, it was bad.

He had slipped and fallen (falling falling falling), the darkness consuming him, just before he hit the scorching lava .

There was darkness again and only flashes of other things.

Hands on his head and something cold, hands against his face, holding his arm, pinning him down. He tried to get away because hands on him never meant anything good.

They meant he would be hurt. They meant blood and bruises and a gentle touch only after they took away everything you had.

He could never fight them long, never really awake, still trapped under a later of darkness, before he was pulled back under.

There were voices, low and uttering. Low humming. Rustling wings. Tommy could never force his eyes open for more than a second. And even then he only saw Wilbur's face taunting him. , Despite how desperately he wanted to get out of the dark. It clung to his mind, exhaustion clung to his body. The Darkness claimed him each time.

Nothing was real. Everything was real. Tommy was tired .

Wilbur had traded his position by Tommy's bed with his dad around half an hour ago, just around 9 in the morning. Wilbur wanted to sleep, but the sheep needed feeding and while Phil hadn't asked him, he would do it.

Wilbur wasn't stupid. He could see the exhausted slump in Phil's shoulders and wings. He could see the fear, too. It had been five days since Tommy had first vanished into the woods and a little over three since they'd been home. Tommy had never truly regained any semblance of consciousness.

He only slept fitfully, tossing and turning as he saw... something in his head. Wilbur didn't know what was happening, but it was even worse when the screaming started. Tommy sometimes screamed- no words, just creaming. Normally it started with increased muttering. Wilbur had made a mistake, the first time it happened, by touching Tommy. Instead of offering comfort, Tommy just screamed at Wilbur's touch. Phil had had to restrain him to keep him from throwing himself off the bed.

His fever had finally dropped some around three am. It hadn't broken, but it seemed to ease into a far more manageable territory, despite the awful they'd had trying to force a bit of broth down his throat. After his fever dropped, he'd calmed some. He certainly wasn't sleeping peacefully, but he was, at times, at least getting a semblance of restful sleep. However, there was no guarantee that would hold.

Wilbur didn't want to admit it, but he was scared. Wilbur was *scared*. Something was seriously wrong and their dad wouldn't tell him what. Wilbur was twenty man years old. He deserved to know.

But did he want to? He could probably demand answers from Phil and his dad would cave, telling him everything, because his dad always knew more than he was willing to let on. Those answers though, those theories... did Wilbur want to know? He wasn't sure.

He just hated feeling helpless. Wilbur was supposed to be smart. hE was supposed to be the one with the plan. He didn't have one. He was useless.

Wilbur was startled from his thoughts by a knock on the front door. Wilbur rose to his feet warily. He didn't pull his sword out but was ready (What are you going to do, a voice whispered, swing it wildly at them with a messed up shoulder? You couldn't protect your family if you wanted to)

Wilbur opened the door just a crack and slumped in relief when he saw it was just Tubbo.

"Hello Wilbur," Tubbor said, fidgeting nervously.

"Good morning Tubbo," Wilbur said, trying for a smile. He was pretty sure it failed. "Do you need something?"

Tubbo wouldn't quite make eye contact with Wilbur. "Well, I hadn't heard from Tommy or anyone else in a couple of days, so I got a bit worried. Is everyone alright?"

Wilbur felt a twinge of guilt. Tubbo was Tommy's best friend and kind of like a bonus brother for Wilbur. The kid didn't have much support at home, and he spent tons of time with Tommy. Of course, he was worried that he hadn't seen his best friend in almost a week.

“Tommy...” Wilbur wasn’t sure how to say it gently. There *wasn’t* a gentle way to say it. “Tommy isn’t doing great, Tubbo. He’s very sick.”

Tubbo’s face paled a few degrees. “Is he going to be ok?”

Wilbur stared helplessly “I.. I don’t know Tubbo. I hope so, but I don’t know.”

Tubbo looked positively green and Wilbur felt bad. Ender, he couldn’t even comfort a kid. “Can I see him?”

“Tubbo, Tommy’s very ill. He’s not awake and-”

“Please, Wilbur? I.. I can take it. I want to see him.” Tubbo practically begged. Tubbo was so small. So much smaller than Tommy, even though Tubbo was older. Wilbur couldn’t blame the kid though. Their family was basically all the kid had. They should’ve told him earlier. Useless.

Wilbur hesitated. “Come on in Tubbo, and have a seat. There’s an extra baked potato on the counter you can have while you wait. Let me go ask Dad ok?”

Tubbo’s eyes were welled with tears, but he nodded determinedly “Okay.”

Wilbur left Tubbo sitting at the kitchen table and made his way to Tommy’s room. The room was dark- Phil had boarded up the window to keep the cold out. And, probably to keep Tommy in. “Tubbo’s here,” Wilbur whispered lowly as he came into the room. “He wants to see Tommy.”

“Did you tell him that Tommy was ill?” Phil whispered back. There seemed to be a permanent frown etched into his face these days.

“Yes.” Wilbur said, “Tubbo insisted he still wanted to.”

Phil sighed heavily. “Well, his fever dropped last night, I think. He seems to be resting a little peacefully. As long as one of us stays in the house. I don’t see why Tubbo can’t sit with him.”

“I’ll let him know,”

Tommy was 16 and Dream had a crossbow to Tubbo’s head, down in the vault, ready to take Tubbo’s final life.

“No.” Tommy croaked. His voice was barely above a whisper, raw from the crying “Tubbo, no!”

“Begging doesn’t help Tommy.” Dream said in that enderd damned playful tone of his “You know that.”

“Please,” Tommy said, “Please I’ll do anything. Anything. Please, just leave him alone.”

“Tommy,” Dream’s voice was patronizing like he was talking to a small child. “This only makes it worse.” And Tommy tried to argue tried to yell, scream, shout, something, but nothing came out. Dream had taken his voice.

Then there was the telltale twang of a crossbow shot and the sound of an arrow hitting flesh. Tommy couldn’t even scream as his best friend died, on the cold floor of Dream’s vault. No one came through the portal. No one saved them. He still couldn’t scream. It was just Dream and Tommy and the blood pooling on the floor between them.

“Oh Tommy,” Dream said and the sound of his voice echoed in Tommy’s head as the darkness claimed him again.

--

Tommy found himself outside next, in a scene directly contradicting what he saw last. He was sitting there with Rubbo at his side as the music played softly. They were waiting on the sunrise. It was nice. Tubbo was just beside him and the air was pleasant, not cold not hot, just... nice.

Tommy wasn't sure how he got there. He found he had a voice again.

"Tubbo?" Tommy said to his best friend- his living and breathing best friend- and his voice shook. "What...?"

"We won," Tubbo said simply, smiling at him like Tommy hadn't just watched him die. "Tommy, we're safe."

"How?"

"Oh, that doesn't matter." Tubbo said lightly "None of this is real anyhow."

"What?"

"Tommy, come on," Tubbo said, laughing like he was telling a joke. "This is all in your head. Sometimes you think too much. I mean, not always. You could think some of your decisions through a little more sometimes, you know?"

"Hold on, hold on, hold on, this isn't real? Tommy stated, "But it feels so..."

"Real?" Tubbo supplied "These things always do, at first. But look, Tommy, really look. How does this feel? How does this look? How does it smell?"

"I'm not going to smell-"

“Tommy,” Tubbo admonished gently “Come on, just focus. Don’t argue for once.. Close your eyes. Use your senses Toms ”

Tommy glared at Tubbo but tried to do as he said. “I don’t smell anything, Tubbo. This is stupid. I don’t feel- “ he froze. He couldn’t feel the bench under him. It as too soft. It felt.... It felt like a bed.”

“Now you’re feeling it,” Tubbo said and happily, though his voice sounded far away “Now, focus on that Tommy. You need to wake up. Wake up, Tommy. Wake up.”

Tommy squeezed his eyes tightly and woke up.

Tommy woke up slowly this time, rather than just simply appearing. His eyes slid open slowly, taking in the dim room he was in as his fuzzy mind tried to catch up. The room he was in was wooden- there didn’t appear to be any windows and only one door at the end of the room.

There was a chest sitting at the end of the room, and there was a jukebox sitting in the corner, though it wasn’t playing any music. It looked familiar. His fuzzy brain tried to place it as he squinted at the room. It looked....

It looked like his old bedroom at Phil’s house.

That was, of course, impossible. That house was gone, according to what Phil told him during the brief time Tommy had lived with Technoblade. Apparently, it had been blown up by a damn creeper and the entire thing had collapsed. At least, Phil had supposed that’s what had happened. No one was living there, not since Tommy and Wilbur left three months after Phil had.

But, it was almost the exact same as he remembered it, down to the red blanket draped over him. Tommy forced himself into a sitting position, grimacing at the way his aching body protested. Had Phil built this to fuck with him? Tommy turned to the left and froze. In the chair beside his bed was Tubbo. Tubbo, with a yellow blanket over his lap and a sweater that Tommy hadn't seen since before... since before the first war. More than that, Tubbo's face was soft and round, and happier than Tommy had seen it in years. And, most damningly, there were no firework scars crisscrossing up his neck and onto the edge of his face. Tubbo looked... young.

Tommy glanced down at his own arms- the only thing not buried beneath the blanket- and he felt his eyes widen. The scars on his arms from the explosions were gone, and his hands seemed.. Small. His arms were short. Something wasn't right. He forced himself to swing his legs out from under the covers. He nearly fell as he stood up, not only from the sharp pain in his body, but from the strange center of gravity. Everything looked... lower. He was shorter.

Tommy's heart jumped into his throat. What was happening? He thought he was awake, but this couldn't be real. Nothing could be-

He started coughing. Loudly and painfully, the coughs wracked his aching body, as he bent over, desperately trying to draw in a breath between the hacks, desperately trying not to wake up whoever was beside his bed.

It was too late though, even as Tommy finally managed to stifle his coughs. "Tommy?" Tubbo look-alike was awake and sounded... like Tubbo. He jumped up from the chair and Tommy only refrained from flinching away because he was too busy trying to stay on his feet. The room was swimming slightly beneath him.. "Tommy, you're awake!"

There was joy in Tubbo's face and voice, *real* joy. "Are you feeling alright? Why are you long at me like that? What... what are you seeing? Big man?"

Tommy gaped for a moment. He didn't know how, but that was Tubbo. "What kind of fucking question is that?" Tommy rasped, wincing at the ache in his chest "I see you standing in my damn room"

Tubbo's face split into a grin that eased something in Tommy's chest, despite himself. Tubbo, in the end, was the only person he could ever really trust. "I'm so glad you're awake!" Tubbo

exclaimed. He clasped his hands together and looked towards the door “Oh, we’ve all been so worried! I should go-”

“Wait-” Tommy rasped, hating the hint of desperation in his voice, which sounded strange and slightly high pitched even to his own ears “Tubbo, hold on. What- What’s today’s date?”

Tubbo’s smile dimmed “Oh, it’s November 20th.”

“What year?” Tommy pressed.

“You didn’t sleep for a whole year Tommy,” Tubbo said with a nervous laugh. “Why- oh alright. It’s November 20, XXXX.”

Tommy’s shaky legs nearly collapsed from under him. Over two years, he was over two fucking years in the past, before he and Wilbur had even discussed leaving for the SMP. He needed to say something or Tubbo would think he was fucking crazy, but his breath was caught in his throat. Tommy leaned against the dresser for support. Dream didn’t know him. The house was still standing.

“Tommy, are you-” Tubbo started, but the door swung open, cutting him off

Tubbo had never died. No one hated him. And if it was two year prior that meant-

“Tubbo, what’s all this noise about?”

Time stood still. That voice, he knew that voice. That sounded like- Tommy couldn’t, wouldn’t get his hopes up. The voice came closer. “Is everything okay?”

Tommy could only watch, frozen, as Wilbur walked through the door, alive and well. “Tommy’s awake!” Tubbo supplied helpfully as if Wilbur wasn’t already staring at Tommy, with nothing but concern in his eyes.

“Tommy, how are you feeling?” Wilbur asked carefully. Tommy normally would have frowned but he was too busy just staring at Wilbur- a Wilbur who was alive, well, and hadn’t been touched by madness yet. “Tommy?” Wilbur took a cautious step forward, hands up like he was approaching a wild animal. Wilbur was alive.

Wilbur was alive and was still his brother. Tommy, in true fashion, didn’t think. He couldn’t. He simply threw himself at Wilbur, wrapping him into a hug.

--

Wilbur stumbled back, unprepared for Tommy to launch himself at him. He bit down a hiss of pain as Tommy jostled his still-healing shoulder and wrapped an arm around Tommy who, despite being on his feet, still looked bad. His legs were shaking- Wilbur could feel Tommy’s whole body shaking. Tommy’s arms were wrapped around him so tightly Wilbur could hardly breathe. Using his good arm, he wrapped Tommy in a hug, allowing the younger boy to bury his face into Wilbur’s sweater.

At least Tommy seemed to know who he was, even if a display of affection like this was entirely out of character. It was weird, but Wilbur wasn’t going to try and pry him off- he wasn’t sure he could if he wanted to.

Tubbo was staring at them with wide eyes, frozen in shock at Tommy’s outburst.

“Go get dad.” Wilbur mouthed to him, and Tubbo nodded dumbly as he squeezed past them quietly, vanishing out the door.

He allowed Tommy to hold on a moment longer (feeling Tommy’s relatively steady breathing against his chest was more comforting than he was willing to admit) before interrupting “Tommy, Tommy, are you okay?”

Tommy mumbled something Wilbur couldn’t make out into his shirt and only gripped tighter. “Tommy,” Wilbur said a little more firmly “You need to at least sit down. You’re shaking.”

Nothing, except somehow Tommy squeezing him tighter. Wilbur couldn't breathe and his shoulder was on fire with pain.

"Tommy, I need to breathe, please."

Wilbur wasn't sure if Tommy even heard him, because for a moment he didn't move. Then, Tommy slowly pulled away from Wilbur and Wilbur could see the tears welled in his eyes. *What* was going on with Tommy?

"Are you okay?" Wilbur asked for what seemed like the hundredth time as Tommy all but collapsed back onto the bed. It was hard to miss the tremors that ran through his hands.

"I'm fine." Tommy finally responded. "Sorry about that, my legs were a little wobbly, needed to hold you for support and all that."

Now that sounded more like Tommy, already brushing off some show of affection in favor of seeming tough. Wilbur almost breathed out a sigh of relief. "I'm sure," Wilbur said dryly. "But seriously, Tommy, you still look terrible." Tommy didn't. If Wilbur was honest. He still looked half a step from death, only alert. And, well, alert was a strong word. Something that Wilbur couldn't place seemed to cloud Tommy's expression. He needed Tubbo to hurry back with their Dad.

Tommy made a face. "Thank's Wilbur. I fuckin' appreciate that."

That also sounded like Tommy.

"You should," Wilbur said haughtily. He glanced at the door. Where was Tubbo? "Now, stay right there, I'll be right back, alright? Don't move."

"You're not the boss of me," Tommy whined but didn't seem like he planned to move from his slumped position on his bed.

“Whatever.” Wilbur said, “I’ll be right back.”

If he didn’t know better, he’d have sworn Tommy mutter ‘You better be’

Chapter End Notes

yeah I honestly wrote all of this in under 18 hours. send help.

I am going to go back and edit the first two chapter titles at some point. All chapter titles and the book title are taken from songs I listen to while working on this.

Also, everyone who comments, you all MADE my day today! I genuinely cannot believe the positive response this has got. Even if I haven't responded to you, know this: I love you. You are amazing.

I'm so tired. enjoy.

sacrifice is the price I pay

Chapter Notes

This chapter was supposed to be more plot, but by the time I wrote it all out it was the length of like, 2 chapters, so I split it up. So... more angst with just a tiny bit of comfort? Maybe? No. Mostly angst.

I pinky promise that plot and comfort are coming, but... first have some angst. As a treat.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Philza was in the stable, feeding the sheep when he heard someone approaching. They were running, whoever it was, so it likely wasn't a sneak attack, but that didn't stop Phil from allowing his hand to slide towards his blade. However, a moment later Tubbo rounded the corner, red-faced and panting.

"Phil!" the boy exclaimed, gasping- he'd likely run all the way from the house and while it was still in view of the house, it wasn't exactly close, with nothing but open pasture between the two buildings.

"Is everything alright?" Phil asked, trying to tamp down the shot of panic he felt. What could have caused Tubbo to run all the way over? "Is Tommy-"

"Tommy's awake!" Tubbo cried, managing a grin between his heavy breaths. "He woke up!"

"He's awake-"

"He recognized me and everything." Tubbo cut him off, then winced "Sorry! But he even got out of bed!"

Phil nearly collapsed against the side of the stable with relief. Tommy was awake and at least semi-coherent. He'd been debating Gapples that morning and Phil was more than happy to

leave them in the basement. He couldn't even be bothered to stop Tubbo who was still talking a mile a minute.

Tubbo's smile faded as he continued to ramble " He's still a bit confused I think because he asked me what the date was and looked at me like I was crazy. Or maybe that was just his fever face. Then Wilbur came in and Tommy just started hugging him and wouldn't let go. He sent me to get you!"

"Let's go then," Phil said. The sheep could wait, he needed to check on Tommy. Just because he was awake now didn't mean that he would be for long, or that they were out of the woods. He remembered the good days when Technoblade's voices first started coming in full force. Days they thought that perhaps the worst was over. It never held and the lows only got lower each time, until finally the voices settled and they learned to cope.

If Tommy was going to go back under, he needed to know what his son was experiencing.

Phil took off towards the house, with long strides while Tubbo, who still hadn't quite caught up to Phil in height, jogged lightly to keep up. Phil didn't have time to slow down, not when Tommy needed him.

Wilbur met them at the door. There was obvious worry on his face. "Is he alright?" Phil asked without preamble.

Wilbur shrugged. "He's more lucid than he has been, but I think he still has a fever. Not to mention he-"

"He hugged you." Phil supplied "Tubbo let me know. Has he said or done anything else?"

"I managed to get him off of me and settled back on the bed. He did curse at me, so that was comforting." a smile ghosted Wilbur's face and Phil couldn't help but snort. "He looked like he might fall asleep again, so I came to make sure Tubbo had found you."

Phil nodded. “Alright, well why don’t you two stay down here so we don’t overwhelm him.”

An unreadable expression passed over Wilbur’s face but he nodded. “Okay.” Phil could deal with that later. Tommy needed him now.

Tommy’s door was mostly closed but Phil could still hear Tommy’s raspy breathing from the other side of the door. That was almost as worrying as whatever was going on in Tommy’s head. He pushed the door open, to see Tommy hunched forward on his bed, staring at his hands. He hadn’t seemed to notice Phil enter the room.

“Tommy,” Phil called softly, trying to not startle Tommy too terribly.

It apparently didn’t work because Tommy’s head snapped up lightning-fast, blue eyes locking instantly on Phil. Phil felt a pool of dread form in his stomach at the expression on Tommy’s face was the same one from the morning this nightmare started.

It was fear. Tommy’s already pale face turned an ever further shade of white, and Phil heard his breath hitch audibly. But, unlike the other morning, Tommy didn’t move from the bed. As fast as the fear appeared it vanished. Tommy’s face just seemed to... shut down. His normally expressive son was practically blank. Unease trickled down Phil’s spine as the tip of his feathers seemed to set on edge.

“How are you feeling?” Phil said, not daring to step any closer and risk a flight response. Tommy wouldn’t be able to get past all of them if he tried to run again, but he might hurt himself.

Tommy was silent long enough that Phil wasn’t sure if he even heard the question before he finally rasped a terse “I’m okay.”

“Are you sure?” Phil pressed. Tommy certainly didn’t look okay. He hadn’t taken his eyes off Phil for more than a few seconds, his eyes kept slipping to the door behind Phil before snapping back. “You’ve been very sick these last few days.”

“I said I’m fucking fine,” Tommy snapped, anger suddenly coloring his tone, mask of indifferent melting. There was another beat of silence, where Phil might have normally called out his son’s language but Phil didn’t dare push him. He could see tremors running up Tommy’s arms, down to his tightly clenched fists, but he wasn’t sure if der shaking was out of some sort of fear or illness. Maybe it was both.

“Tommy I need to ask you something,” Phil said quietly. He didn’t want to push Tommy, but the kid was relatively lucid. “About some of the things that happened while you were unconscious. Do you feel up to that?”

Tommy stared at him a moment before responding. “Actually I feel pretty shit right now. I want to go back to sleep.”

Phil was almost certain that was a lie. Tommy’s jaw was set stubbornly, and his slightly fever glazed eyes glinted in a challenge. Tommy was still sick-the audible rasp in his chest was proof enough of that- so Phil didn’t call him on the lie. He wasn’t sure that if he did he would even get answers. Tommy could be terribly stubborn. “Alright.” Phil agreed, despite how desperately he wanted answers. Despite how worried he was, that if Tommy went back under, he would get trapped in yet another nightmare state. “Do you mind staying awake long enough to eat something? And have a small bit of healing potion. You can’t have much, but it will help you feel better.”

Tommy’s jaw clenched and Phil was almost certain that he would say something but he finally averted his gaze and nodded tersely.

Phil let his smile slip off his face as he left the room. Tommy still wasn’t well.

Tommy didn't relax until the door clicked shut behind Philza. Tommy let out a shaky breath and he managed to unclench his hands. There were small angry red half-moons on his palms, stark against his too-pale skin.

Tommy laid back on the bed, letting his eyes close to try and block out the light from the dim lantern. His whole body hurt and his head was pounding. It has hard to think, even baring time-fucking-travel, which was apparently a thing. Or maybe it was all in his head. Tommy wasn't sure.

He'd only just managed to keep it together, with Philza standing in the same fucking room as him for the first time since he'd spawned the withers. He hasn't spoken to Philza since that day- he hadn't had much of a chance- and had avoided him at all costs besides. He knew where he stood in comparison to Technoblade.

Tommy could still see a bloody Phil standing over Wilbur's body. When Phil was standing in the door, he couldn't help but wait for Technoblade to appear over Phil's shoulder, menacing and angry. Calling for the death of *Theseus* .

But, Technoblade wasn't here and wouldn't be. Tommy has seen Phil's eldest kid for the first time in years when they met on the SMP again. At least he wouldn't have to worry about that.

And Phil. This wasn't that Phil, not yet anyway. This Phil hadn't done any of that yet. This Phil didn't want him dead yet. This Phil didn't know.

That thought only offered a sliver of comfort, but a larger part of his brain was still screaming at him to get out. It didn't help that he could still feel a fever pulling at his exhausted mind as he tried not to panic. He wasn't sure that he could have made it past Phil anyway. But he was too tired now to even try. He was too weak.

Everything felt distant. Nothing felt real. Was it real?

Did it matter?

“Tommy.” That was Wilbur’s voice. “Tommy, can you sit up?”

Tommy groaned but forced himself onto his elbow, eyes cracking open to stare at Wilbur blearily. “Gimme the potion,” Tommy grumbled, holding his hand out.

Wilbur frowned “You need to eat something, Tommy.”

“Not hungry.” Tommy countered. He didn’t want to eat. He just wanted to sleep, to make the aching stop. He wanted his mind to be quiet. “Just tired.”

“Alright,” Wilbur said after a long moment of silence and sat the soup down on the table. He gave Tommy a half-empty bottle of healing potion, already uncorked. “Are you sure you can-”

Before Wilbur could finish the sentence, he’d already slugged the entire contents of the bottle. It was cool liquid and Tommy could already feel the magic settling in his system. He handed the empty bottle back to Wilbur, who looked a little concerned. He wasn’t sure why. Healing potions were no big deal.

Tommy allowed himself to fall back onto the bed, lulled to sleep by his exhaustion and the magic in his body.

Philza needed some space. He dispatched Wilbur to give Tommy food and a potion and left Tubbo curled up under a blanket on the couch. The kid had only dozed in short bursts since he’d gotten there the day before and looked just as exhausted as he and Wilbur did. It had been almost six days in total since the morning Tommy had thrown himself out the window, but somehow it felt like weeks.

Phil had left the sheep half-fed and while he wanted nothing more to fall into his own bed and get some real rest, but Tommy wasn’t out of the woods and Phil still hadn’t finished

feeding the sheep.

So he slipped out the door and through the small stand of trees between the backdoor and the stable. It wasn't quite dark yet. Phil could still see streaks of color in the evening sky, and he was glad that mobs weren't out at least. He could take them, certainly, but he didn't want to.

Phil allowed a heavy sigh at the thought of the night that stretched out before him. He would let Tubbo and Wilbur sleep for the night and he would take the night shift. In the morning the two of them could figure it out while he napped.

As much as he wished they could all sleep, Phil had seen the fear in Tommy's eyes. If Tommy managed to sleep peacefully, it would be more of a surprise than if he started screaming again.

Ender, Phil was tired. He pulled his wings close against his back, buffering against the cold breeze. He wondered what, exactly Tommy saw or heard that made him so afraid.

So afraid of him, at least.

Phil hadn't let himself consider the implications yet, of the idea that Tommy had apparently hugged Wilbur almost immediately, but hadn't let Phil get within five feet of him. That Tommy had been scared of him. Phil wished he could remember what Tommy had screamed, exactly, before he'd run that first morning. The memory, however, was muddled by a haze of adrenaline and panic, and recall only worsened from the tired fog in Phil's brain. He desperately wished he could remember, but a tiny, selfish part of him was glad that those words, whatever they were, were lost now.

It took only a few minutes to finish up feeding and Phil was glad that darkness hadn't totally fallen. Even with a lighted path, mobs could be a pain, especially since Phil hadn't bothered with armour in his own home. Phil left the stable and locked the gate behind him, grimacing at the biting cold wind as he trudged down the path towards his home.

He wondered if Tommy was already asleep, or if he was still awake and shaking like Phil left him.

Phil was so engrossed in thought, he almost missed the flash of movement in the woods, about fifty yards behind him on the left. Almost. The movement was enough to spike adrenaline through his system and his thoughts sharpened.

It wasn't the red of a fox, but of clothing. A person. Someone was in the woods, and it wasn't Wilbur. He'd only sent Technoblade the message a few days ago and it took almost twice that long to make the trip, and that was if his eldest was coming at all. Technoblade's reply to his message had somehow been scrambled by the cross-server transmission, so Phil had only received an indecipherable string of symbols.

Villagers couldn't move like that, nor did they wear bright colors. The only other people that lived nearby were Wilbur and the kid's deadbeat guardian, who was only called such by a technical term. The man was never home and certainly wouldn't be looking for Tubbo if he was. So, a stranger was in his woods. Phil didn't have time for that. Tubbo was asleep on the couch and likely didn't have a weapon on him. Wilbur was probably still awake, but he wasn't prepared. He had no armour on and his sword was likely laying by his bed, where he'd left it the morning before. And Tommy? Tommy could hardly stand. Phil couldn't let this stranger reach their house.

Phil couldn't see the red any more. Whoever it was had likely slipped behind a tree and had the fading light to their advantage, but if he strained, he could hear the shifting of the forest floor under the intruder's feet. Perks of hybrid senses, he supposed.

He drew his sword but didn't yet lift it. He would give whoever this was a chance to reveal themselves. Perhaps it was a lost traveler, innocently passing through. It wasn't common, by every few months someone would wander through, half-starved and dazed from somehow getting almost irreparably lost.

Perhaps it wasn't Phil would never forget the sound of his son's screams as a bounty hunter busted through there from the front door when they were only four. The blood of a hybrid could bring a pretty price. Either way, Phil would give them a chance to explain themselves. If they chose not to take it, the consequences laid solely on them.

"Oi!" Phil yelled, "I know you're out there. Come out and show yourself."

There was silence for a moment and Phil's face hardened as he hoisted his sword up to a more defensive stance. "I don't want to kill someone tonight. I said show yourself."

A tall figure emerged from the tree line a few seconds later, illuminated faintly by the lanterns and dusky evening light. A billowing red cloak hung from their shoulders and netherite armour glinted over their clothes. A golden crown glinted on top of their head and a pig skull obscured the upper part of their face. They were imposing even without the sharp sword that dangled from their right hand.

The outfit was strange, and far too ornate for anyone on a server of this caliber, but parenthood was a funny thing. Before the figure even spoke, Phil had put his sword away.

"That wasn't quite the warm welcome I expected." Phil's eldest son called across the clearing, as he removed the pig mask with his free hand, revealing a familiar face. His voice was a little deeper- a little rougher- than Phil remembered, and colored with the hint of a new accent.

"Technoblade," Phil said, smiling genuinely for the first time in nearly a week. "It's good to see you, son."

"Good to see you too, Phil." Techno strode across the clearing, in long sure steps, as he allowed his sword to fall back into his inventory. "Even if you did threaten my life."

There was teasing in that, despite his son's deadpan delivery. "You were sneaking around, like some sort of bounty hunter," Phil said though he knew Technoblade didn't particularly need the explanation. "And I didn't expect you for another few days. I thought you were still farming potatoes."

"Oh yeah," Technoblade said with a grin that looked a touch sheepish. "I was. I just made good time."

"Good time? It should've taken you much longer. Did you sleep at all?" Phil asked. He wished that the light outside was better and that he could make out more of his son's face than the dim light allowed.

“Eh, I slept enough,” Techno said casually. His tone shifted to a far more serious one.”But I don’t think my sleep habits or travel skills are why you called me here. You said something was wrong with Tommy?”

And that was Techno, always deflecting, yet still cutting to the heart of things. Technoblade probably hadn't slept, simply because Phil had asked him to return home. Damn comm messages and their character limits. Phil let out a heavy sigh. “It’s a long story Technoblade. Let’s go sit inside and we’ll talk there.”

Chapter End Notes

I think my problem is I don't know how to write fluff or plot. Only pain. Also, some of what happened in the SMP canon doesn't quite match my version but it is fanfiction so reality can be what I want.

I genuinely have cried over everyone's kind comments. This is the most positive response I've gotten on anything, ever, so I'm kinda riding the high off that tbh. you people rock. Hopefully, a chapter will be out tomorrow or Monday, depending on the speed at which I can finish the assignments I've neglected in favor of writing this and watching Puffy's stream.

you can see it in my smile

Chapter Summary

Tommy has some thoughts, Phil tries to get some answers, and Technoblade causes problems, as usual.

Chapter Notes

this is a long one, but honestly, not much happens? Idk, I'm not happy with it but have 4.9k words of whatever this is.

also I upped the rating bc language.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Smoke.

There was smoke everywhere. He didn't know where he was, because he couldn't see the next step in front of him for the thick smoke that hung in the air, clogging his lungs. Tommy didn't know how exactly it got there, not when he couldn't see any fire. Had something blown up?

Had he blown something up? Had he started another fire?

Tommy didn't know. He just couldn't breathe. Smoke stung his eyes, and clogged his nose, forcing itself down into this throat. He coughed desperately, trying to force it out, but every breath was worse than the last.

"Help!" He called hoarsely, into the smoke, only to be met with eerie silence.

Where was everyone else? Tommy stumbled forward. IF he only kept going, he would have to get to clean air, but something tripped him and he found himself on his knees, still gasping

for breath, choking on the thick air.

He couldn't breathe. He couldn't breathe. He couldn't-

Tommy woke up, still coughing. His chest ached as he shot straight up, gasping for air between the heavy coughs. A hand was on his back and between the blood pounding in his ears and his hacking coughs he could hear someone speaking, though he couldn't make out the exact words. Ghostbur. He hadn't seen Ghostbur in a while.

"Tommy, Tommy are you alright?" he managed to catch that, which seemed like a stupid fucking question, considering it felt like his lungs were about to come out of his chest.

Wait. No. Not Ghostbur. As the coughs abated, Tommy's blurred vision came into focus and the face of his very much alive brother filled his vision, rather than the translucent version he was used to.

Right. The past. Holy shit he was in the past.

"I'm fine." Tommy croaked, because the longer he stared at Wilbur the weirder it was going to get, and he didn't really want to deal with emotions right now. "Just had a little cough. Nothing I can't handle."

Wilbur didn't look convinced, so Tommy charged on, talking as fast as he could. "No, really, just a bit of a tickle in my throat, you know? Nothing Big T can't handle with a bit of food and rest. Speaking of food, I'm fucking starving. Can I eat something?"

The concern in Wilbur's eyes didn't fade but he did draw away from Tommy. "Where was this appetite last night when you turned down your soup?"

Tommy only vaguely remembered what happened after Phil had left the room, too tired and disoriented to really recall. He did remember the healing potion Wilbur had given him, even if it was only half of one, that that was probably why he felt a million times more awake,

even if his chest still hurt. Even if he was trying very hard not to think about being in the enderfucking past. “I dunno, I was tired. Now I’m hungry. You know, these are pretty basic bodily functions, Wilbur. I thought a smart guy like you would know that.”

Wilbur rolled his eyes and Tommy counted it as a win since it seemed like he was less focused on Tommy’s weird little stare now. “Well, I can bring you some leftover soup up here”

“Fine,” Tommy whined, mostly for show. He didn’t really care about soup, one way or the other. He thought he might’ve disliked it though, at this age. Pogtopia and Logsteadshire had cured him of any picky eating, though. Enough of that, train of thought, Tommy decided, forcefully derailing it. “It’s better than starvation.”

Wilbur didn’t laugh. Tommy studied Wilbur a moment, in the moment of silence. ACTually studied him, not just ‘oh shit my dead brother is alive’. Wilbur looked *tired*, though not in the same way he had in the last few months of his life when Tommy wasn’t sure he slept at all unless he simply passed out. Wilbur was holding his shoulder at an odd angle, too. It was hurt. Wilbur always sat ramrod straight when he was injured, especially if it was in his torso. Tommy hid a frown. He didn’t remember Wilbur hurting his shoulder until they were in the SMP. Had Tommy being in the past somehow caused that? It couldn’t have though. All Tommy had done was fucking sleep, apparently. “Alright, just stay put, and try not to fall asleep.”

“I’m not a toddler,” Tommy protested, tucking away that observation for later “I won’t just run off.”

A strange look passed over Wilbur’s face for a second before he stood up. “Well, you seem to be taking enough naps for one, so don’t try that either.”

“Hey! I have been ill! That doesn’t count as a nap! I don’t take naps, bitch! I’m a big man.” Tommy protested, crossing his arms.

“Whatever you say,” Wilbur said.

“I’m not a pussy. I’m actually totally fine!” Tommy said. “To prove it to you, I’ll go get my own soup. I don’t need you to baby me, because I’m not a baby.”

Wilbur’s eyes widened and the smile fell off. “Oh no, you’re staying in bed.” Wilbur said firmly “At least for a few more hours.”

“Wilburrrr.” Tommy whined. “I’m fine! A little cold can’t knock me down. And getting up would make me feel so much better. I’m tired of this fucking bed.” The room was boring- Tommy didn’t even have a window to look out!

Glass shattering beneath him, digging into his skin. No pain. Only fear.

As quickly as the strange half-memory had come, it vanished. Tommy blinked, shaking his head to clear the strange sensation. What the fuck was *that* about?

“-you even hear what I just said?” Wilbur sounded a little irritated, drawing Tommy out of his thoughts.

“Uh, no.” Tommy said, trying not to sound like he’d just a weird flashback about fucking window “Sorry, I thought it was too fucking boring. I was thinking about what I wanted to eat and how good it would feel to sit on something that wasn’t this damn bed.”

Wilbur scowled. “Tommy I can’t believe you sometimes. Well, alright. You can go downstairs for a few minutes, but then it’s back to bed.”

“Fine.” Tommy groaned “you’re no fun.”

“Oh, I’m sorry.” Wilbur grumbled, “I’m a little stressed out since you almost died.”

Tommy scoffed. “I didn't almost die, Wilbur. I’m too tough for that. I just got a bit of a cold.” And, ok, Tommy knew that was exactly true, but he was fine. He’d never time traveled

before, so a small coma was probably normal! Just like the nightmares. Tommy didn't have a fucking guide, ok?

In retrospect, he couldn't remember actually hurting, all he could remember was...

Icy hands wrapped around his neck. Water bubbling up in his lungs. Hot breath on his neck. A sword dragging against a whetstone. "Run"

Enough of *that*. Tommy pushed that train of thoughts aside before he could follow those tracks too far. So what, he'd had nightmares and a fever. That wasn't too bad.

Wilbur had started talking again, but Tommy, to be fair, wasn't really listening. He was busy contemplating time travel which was objectively more important. Even if it was nice, hearing Wilbur's real voice again, instead of Ghostbur's whispery tone. Tommy only tuned back in to catch the last sentence.

"-so thickheaded. I can't believe you." Wilbur looked annoyed, which, Tommy was pretty fucking used to. It was such a familiar face on Wilbur and Tommy found a lump in his throat. He knew it before, but this was Wilbur. Ghostbur hadn't ever really gotten annoyed- was too lost in his stupid happy thoughts and blue to even understand what was happening half the time. Even before then, in Pgtopia, Wilbur had only ever been angry, so angry. He'd never really cared what Tommy had to say. But this Wilbur was none of those things. This Wilbur didn't hate Tommy yet.

"Sorry, what was that?" Tommy said, not even trying to sound sorry as he jumped out of bed. Well. Jumped was a strong word. He managed to get up and not fall on his shaky legs. "I couldn't hear you over the sound of how cool I am."

"Fuck off," Wilbur said while offering Tommy his arm for support. As much as he didn't want to take it, he nearly stumbled on his first step. Not only were his legs far too shaky, but his center of gravity was also wildly different. Damn it, he was short again. He gripped Wilbur's arm tightly using it for balance. "Come on, let's go." Tommy whined, "I'm starving."

“Oh Ender.” Wilbur said as Tommy leaned against him just a hair more. (not because he couldn’t walk! Wilbur just... needed to feel useful and who was Tommy to deny him that). “You’re also showering, as soon as you get done eating. You smell like shit.”

Tommy flipped him the bird with his free hand. Tommy managed to stay upright (and not just because Wilbur was helping him!), as they left the room and headed towards the stairs. Tommy could hear people talking faintly below. He couldn’t make out their voices but he assumed it was Tubbo and Phil.

Tommy swallowed thickly. Phil would be down there.

Phil wouldn’t hurt him, though. This Phil didn’t hate him yet. Tommy hadn’t betrayed him yet. Besides, even last night, from what Tommy could recall, Phil had been... softer wasn’t the right word, but perhaps warmer. Like when he was a kid. It made sense, he supposed since they were in the past, but it was still strange.

But he could face Phil. He could handle it. He was ready for that, even as a small tremor ran up his hand. Phil was safe here. Wilbur was sane. Tubbo didn’t hate him. Technoblade wasn’t here. As long as none of them found out what he’d done. He’d be safe.

They slowly picked their way down the steps, Tommy leaning far more heavily on Wilbur than he wanted to admit, but finally, finally, Tommy made it downstairs. Somehow, that was even stranger than his bedroom. His room was... well it was a bedroom. Tommy hadn’t spent much time there as a kid because it was boring as fuck, especially when he could be downstairs or outside doing literally anything but sitting in his room reading or some shit.

Downstairs though, in the kitchen and large living space, Tommy had spent hours with his family. He hadn’t seen it over two years and hadn’t thought he’d ever see it again. It looked exactly the same as it had in his memory. A huge fireplace was inlaid against the far wall, with a comfortable set of chairs around it, piled high with blankets. The soft couch was pushed against the wall like it always had been, a deep green cover. There was a fire crackling in the fireplace, and the scent of food wafting from the kitchen that was just out of sight around the corner.

He hadn’t considered the house home in a long, *long* time. Even before they left for good, it had been more of a house than a home. Tommy hadn’t really had a home in the SMP, though

L'Manberg was probably the closest he'd come, what, with Wilbur, Tubbo, and all the others, but that too was gone. But, that was no reason for the lump in his throat. This house was just a house. No need to *cry* over it.

"Tommy?" Wilbur prodded and Tommy realized he'd stopped on the bottom step and simply been staring.

"Sorry, just making sure you had time to catch your breath, Wil" Tommy said, trying for a cheeky grin. He wasn't sure Wilbur bought it.

They moved into the kitchen, where Tubbo, who looked half awake was sitting at the dark oak kitchen table staring blankly at a plate of bacon while Philza hovered over the counter, still working on breakfast. Tommy swallowed hard. Phil wouldn't hurt him. Phil didn't hate him.

"How's Tommy?" Phil asked, still facing forward- it looked like he was chopping up mushrooms and was whisking an egg. Phil's wings were tucked neatly against his back. Phil's wings were still a deep brown, nearly black in some lights, but still healthy and strong, a far cry from the blackened and twisted wings Tommy had last seen, yet another blatant reminder that Tommy was actually in the past.

"Right here, bitch." Tommy said, his mouth moving before he could even really think about what he was saying. Oops.

Phil whirled around and Tommy was surprised to see the genuine concern and... happiness, on Phil's face. Phil had looked at him with mostly apathy since... Tommy wasn't sure when it started but it had been a long time. Then after Doomsday, it was barely concealed contempt though Tommy wasn't stupid enough to not notice that most people looked at him that way. It was just, well, it wasn't that he *cared*, but that Philza was one of the few people that would actually do something about that contempt.

"Tommy!" Tubbo exclaimed, suddenly wide awake "You're up!"

“He is,” Phil said though he sounded a little less joyful than Tubbo. His eyes slid from Tommy to Wilbur “Why?”

“Because I’m hungry,” Tommy said, releasing Wilbur’s arms so that he could cross his arm. He swayed a little, but Tommy had more than enough practice standing on far worse injuries, even if this stupid body wasn’t. “And I’m a big man! I’m fine! Already basically better.”

Tommy did take a seat after that- not because he was tired- but because that was what people did- they sat. Wilbur went to raise his hands, but aborted the movement with a wince and settled on a grimace instead. “Either I was going to help him down the steps or let him fall down them. I figured that he probably didn’t need a concussion.”

Phil shook his head, but he smiled at them nonetheless, “Tommy does have a stubborn streak.”

“Hey!” Tommy said indignantly. “I’m sitting right here!” He hated it when they did that- talked about him like he was a kid- like he wasn’t even there. Though, he supposed he was still a kid now. It still sucked.

Phil’s eyes landed back on him and Tommy resisted the urge to look away as Phil gave him a smile “I know.” Seeing Phil’s smile was just plain weird. Phil hadn’t really smiled since he’d join the SMP. *Since he’d taken a diamond sword* and- Tommy forced himself to move away from that thought.

“Bitch.” Tommy said instead, more out of habit than anything. “Can I please eat? I’m so fucking hungry”

“Of course.” Phil said, “You’ve hardly been eating, it’s no wonder your starving.”

“Yeah, Tubbo agreed between bites of his own food “I’ve only been here a couple of days, but you’ve only eaten like, twice.”

Tommy frowned. What did Tubbo mean by only a couple of days? Tommy hadn’t been sick that long, had he? He couldn’t remember, of course, since he was in a time-travel induced,

fever fueled coma, littered with hallucinations that were just plain weird, from what he could remember.

Tommy was going to ask but then there was soup in front of his and holy shit, Tommy knew he was hungry, but he hadn't realized how hungry he was until the food was sitting right in front of him. He was pretty sure that the others were talking and for all Tommy knew they could have been dancing the hula because all coherent thought left his brain as he started eating. He was very, very hungry.

He wasn't sure how long he ate, but he was pretty sure that he inhaled his soup in record time. Well, probably not, he thought distantly as he mopped up the last bit of soup with his slice of bread. The first week in Logsteadshire had been rough and when Dream had brought him a single loaf of bread at the end of that week, Tommy tore it to shreds, despite how much it hurt his pride.

This was probably a close second though.

"What was that?" Tommy asked, finally tuning back into the conversation at the sound of his name.

"Nothing," Wilbur said, just a touch too quickly. "Just said that you really were hungry. I've never seen you eat that fast"

Time-travel wasn't an easy task, and besides, he apparently had just hopped back into a body that was already fighting a fucking cold, so it was working overtime. "I told you I was fucking hungry."

"I can see that, mate," Phil said as he landed over the table to grab Tommy's empty bowl. Tommy flinched slightly at the sudden movement but managed to cover it with a fake cough. A fake cough that descended into another painful coughing fit. Ender damn it, this stupid cold was not helpful.

Phil and Wilbur were both already half out of their seats, but Tommy shook his head. "I'm fine, He wheezed between the hacking coughs "M fine."

That didn't stop Phil from getting him a glass of water, or Tubbo and Wilbur from staring at him with a mix of pity and concern. If Tommy could stop coughing he'd glare at them, and tell them to piss off, but his chest just hurt too much.

Phil pressed the glass into Tommy's hand and Tommy didn't even hesitate to down it. This Philza wasn't out to get him and even if he was, he wouldn't go for poison, like a coward. The water didn't immediately stop coughing, but it did ease the pressure in his chest enough so that he could, after about another thirty seconds, catch his breath. Tommy drew in a deep breath.

"You sound bad, mate." Tubbo said, frowning "Are you sure you should be up and about?"

"Oh pis off, all of you," Tommy said, waving a hand. He ignored the burn in his chest as he sat back upright "I'm fine. Probably would be doing better if you gave me more than half of a healing potion though."

Phil and Wilbur exchanged a look that Tommy couldn't read and Tommy frowned. "I thought you hated healing potions?" Tubbo asked, looking at him quizzically.

Tommy scoffed. Hate healing potions? "What d- oh! Uh, well, yes. You're right. I... don't like them." Tommy wanted to slam his head into the table. Of course, he had hated them, up until they got to the SMP. After that, he had no choice but to learn to like them. Hell, he'd even built up a tolerance for them during exile that was... probably concerning, based on what Techno said, but Tommy chose to think it was cool. This body, however, didn't have that tolerance. It might kill him to drink more. Literally. He'd only ever seen someone drink too much

Ended damn it all. "I was kidding," he said, desperately trying to fill the strange silence and make up for his slip-up "I was testing you all! You passed! You know I hate those sucking positions. Makes me feel all, potion-y." Tommy barked a laugh that bordered vaguely on hysteria. "Potions? Nah, not for Big T!"

This was way harder than Tommy thought it would be.

As relieved as Phil was to see Tommy up and about, he wasn't sure Tommy should be up yet. He looked pale, his cough, while better, was still terrible, and he was unsteady enough on his feet that he'd had to use Wilbur as a crutch to make it to the kitchen. Not only that, Tommy still seemed... off. Case in point, the entire rant about potions trying to play off whatever just happened.

Tommy was a shit liar, which Phil was almost always glad for since it made his life as a parent much easier. However, what the kid lacked there he made up for in sheer volume. He could talk and talk and talk until you forgot what he was ever trying to lie to you about. Phil shared another look with Wilbur as Tommy rambled.

It was strange for Tommy to complain about the lack of healing potion. While Philza was certainly careful, especially with his youngest, about the amount of potion he gave his sons, he had always had to force Tommy to take any of it. Getting him to take a quarter of a potion after he'd fallen out of a tree and broken his ankle when he was 8 had been insanely difficult and Tommy had almost categorically refused it for every illness or injury since.

The stuff didn't taste good- to Philza it didn't have much of a taste at all, but he'd also been making healing potions long before any of his children were thought of- but that was the point. You were supposed to want to drink the potions or run the risk of taking too much. Some people also hated the feeling of magic in their system- Tommy was also one of those people. And Tommy, if nothing else, was stubborn. He wouldn't just give up on that hill so quickly.

But Tommy was lying, Philza could see through it and he was almost certain that Wilbur could too from the concerned look on Wilbur's face. Tommy, in true form, had forced the subject along and Tubbo had allowed it, engaging his friend before Phil could decide if it was worth it to call Tommy out on it.

"No need to get work up Tommy." Tubbo said, crossing his arms, though the kid was smiling "But I can tell you're feeling more yourself."

"That I am, Tubbo!" Tommy exclaimed loudly, though not quite at his normal boisterous level, more like he was just... yelling. "I am feeling much better, even with that stupid cough."

But that would only hold a fuckin' pussy down!"

Phil couldn't help it when his eyes shot up. Tommy had a vulgar mouth- he liked to push boundaries, and that was one way he'd always done it (funnily enough, Technoblade refrained from swearing the most, and as a kid Tommy had always pushed him to say fuck. Phil just thought it was funny and let it happen). Besides, Phil himself was far from a saint, and not to mention Wilbur's own penchant for swearing, it was no surprise that Tommy knew most of the words in the book and felt comfortable using them, just like the rest of the household, but it seemed like overnight Tommy's swearing had increased exponentially. "Mate, cool it with the swearing" Phil finally said.

"Fuck off. Who do you think you- I learned it from? Who do you think I learned it from?" The slip-up was small, but that obviously wasn't what Tommy started to say and Phil could see the unease in Tommy's eyes. They needed to get to the bottom of this, starting now. Tommy was still improving, but if his hunch was right, it was only a matter of time

"Wilbur," Phil said and grinned at the indignant noise his middle child made. Tubbo snickered and Tommy let out a laugh that was mostly convincing. Mostly. If Phil was going to get answers, or at least make Tommy listen to him he needed to get Tommy alone, though. Other people could simply help him deflect. Technoblade was out doing... something. He was almost certain Technoblade hadn't slept the night before. After Phil had explained what happened with Tommy, Techno had taken a walk. That had been hours ago, and he still hadn't returned, but Phil mostly wasn't worried. Technoblade hadn't left the server. Despite his eldest's long absences and overall cold demeanor, Technoblade cared about his siblings, Phil was sure of it. Technoblade just wasn't built for sitting by bedsides like Wilbur or Tubbo. (Phil could understand that. His wings had itched to fly all week. To just fly and get away from it all, but with Tommy so sick and Wilbur injured, he hadn't had a choice, as much as he ached for the open skies)

"Hey, Wil, why don't you and Tubbo go take care of the sheep and see if you can gather some honey. We are running a little low." Phil said, monopolizing the brief silence before Tommy could. "Tommy and I will clean up breakfast."

For just a second Wilbur looked like he was going to protest because Phil had asked him to move the honey to a different cabinet just this morning, but understanding dawned on Wilbur's face when Phil quickly red his brow slightly.

“Sure!” Wilbur said “I can feed the sheep and then we can look for beehives together, Tubbo. You still have some tame ones nearby?”

“Oh yeah!” Tubbo exclaimed with a grin, pushing away from the table “I have a few hives not far from here!”

Wilbur gave the kid a smile as he herded him for the door “Sounds great TUBbo.” Their voices faded as they headed out the back door and that left Phil and Tommy in the kitchen alone.

“Ugh, are you really going to make me do dishes?” Tommy grumbled, even as he tried to stand up. “Come on now. Are you all the ones going on about how sickly and frail I am? And now-”

“Just take a seat, Tommy..” Phil said. Tommy, who had been looking just over Philza’s shoulder flinched, but obliged. Silence fell over the room. Phil was standing on one side, while Tommy was sitting about as far as he could get from Phil without leaving the table completely. He was resolutely staring out the window as if he was enchanted by the birds, but Phil noticed how tense he held himself, and the way his eyes would cut ever so slightly towards Phil. Tommy was still scared and he had no idea why.

Phil sat down.

“Tommy.” Tommy ignored him “Tommy, look at me.”

Slowly, very slowly, Tommy turned to face him. His jaw was clenched tightly and Phil couldn’t quite read the look behind his eyes. “If you’re going to ask me about how I feel, I feel fine. A little cold can’t kill-”

“Damn it, Tommy.” Philza snapped, far louder and harsher than he meant to, and Tommy flinched. Phil forced himself to take a deep breath. “Tommy, you didn’t have a ‘little cold’ you almost died. You had hypothermia!”

Tommy's brow furrowed "I...what? Hypothermia? Five days? How the hell did I even get hypothermia?"

Phil's frown deepened and something cold coiled in Phil's gut "Tommy, you... don't remember?"

"Obviously fucking not." Tommy snapped and there was a hint of hysteria in his tone.

Phil took a deep breath to steady himself. "Tommy, almost a week ago, I went to wake you up and you... I don't know exactly what happened." Phil admitted "You started screaming at me- I couldn't quite understand you, but I'm pretty sure you threatened to kill me, before jumping out your closed window, and vanishing into the woods. Wilbur and I looked for you for hours- he found you inside a small cave you carved into a cliff wall, unconscious."

"What the fuck." Tommy muttered. Phil could see his eyes getting wider "I... I don't really remember that. I-"

"You don't remember that? Tommy, you jumped straight through your closed window- that's why we had to board it up" That was worse than Phil thought. Technoblade had usually remembered what he did, even when he was out of control. On when to voices got to such a terrible point, had ever blacked out. Of course, Tommy could simply have been running a fever, but still, to have run for ages like the enderdragon was on your heels.... How could Tommy not remember? How could that simply be fever-induced? And Tommy shouldn't have been sick; he had been fine the night before, even after the enderman incident.

"Oh Ender," Tommy said "I.. I don't. My old noggin is just empty. Nothing. Not a bit of memory. No clue what you were talking about. My mind is just blank for those few days, sorry mate. Guess the old hypothermia got rid of it, eh? And sorry about whatever I said, must've been the fucking healing potions, or maybe I had a little knock on the head. You know me, Big Man always getting into something. Either way, I'm totally fine"

Now that was a lie, Philza could see it in the way Tommy's hands were dancing in the air, accentuating his words, which were just a little too carefree. Tommy didn't remember, not exactly, but he certainly didn't believe that. Tommy was lying to him.

“You aren’t fine, son.” Yet another unfamiliar expression flashed across Tommy’s face.
“Tommy, please-”

“I’m back!” The backdoor swung open, and Technoblade walked in. Several things happened at once.

Tommy shouted, not quite a scream but somewhere between surprise and fear. Then the same kid who Phil had seen struggling to stay upright maybe fifteen minutes ago, shot out of his chair so fast that Phil almost missed the movement. Then, Tommy’s gangly legs somehow tangled with the chair and both Tommy and the chair crashed to the floor.

Simultaneously, Phil had, very eloquently, shouted “Oh shit!”. He’d instinctually jumped to his feet as Tommy fell, wings puffing out in surprise at Techno’s sudden entrance and Tommy’s immediate reaction.

Technoblade, who had apparently been surprised by the sudden movement and loud noise, dropped the dead rabbits in his hand and drew his sword, taking a step back, as he too shouted in surprise.

“Wait,” Technoblade said, pausing his own scream. “Why are we screaming?”

Chapter End Notes

I Cannot keep up with the lore, jeesh, I watch one lore stream and miss 3! Puffy's lore stream earlier was so good though (I think it was Monday?). Anyway. I will be lore binging this weekend

on an unrelated note the pacing of this story is wack. my bad. also, so many assignments were sacrificed in pursuit of this chapter. I will be doing them now as I cry. Technoblade was supposed to have a POV here but.... I had almost 5k words and a good ending so maybe next time gang.

i'm the story you don't speak of

Chapter Summary

two for one brotherly angst

Chapter Notes

nothing is happy in this chapter and I am so sorry.

There WILL be comfort. I'm not lying I swear, but the comfort is so much better when the angst has time to simmer.

Also, I removed the 10 chapter goal. This sucker is going to be longer. probably. idk. I have not planned this out. I just don't want to be misleading.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Technoblade had spent the night hunting. No, that wasn't right; hunting implied that he had a target. The voices screamed for blood and unfortunately, there were no acceptable human candidates around, so he settled for the next best thing- mobs. The feeling of his sword in his hand was as familiar as the breath in his lungs, merely an extension of himself, cutting down the nearly endless mobs that spawned around Phil's house. He'd also killed a few small animals once the worst of the haze had cleared. He'd gone a little psycho the night before and he hated to worry Phil like that, so he could at least bring them lunch. The chat still screamed for blood, it always did, but it had eased enough of them that he could at least think about what Phil had told him the night before.

--

Wilbur was upstairs, sitting by Tommy and they'd banished Tubbo to Wilbur's bed for rest. Technoblade wasn't sure if Wilbur was sincerely that worried about Tommy or if he didn't want to be in the same room as Technoblade. Based on the look on Wilbur's face, it was likely some of both. But his issues with Phil's oldest son weren't what was important. Tommy's issues were.

“Okay,” Technoblade said, allowing himself to settle at the table “Phil you’re worrying me and

being just a little cryptic. What’s goin’ on?”

Phil looked exhausted- dark bags hung under his eyes and his blonde hair hung limply under his hat. His voice was low and Technoblade could literally hear the exhaustion in his voice. . “I don’t know, Technoblade. He... I don’t know. He isn’t fine, but I think he’ll live now, at least.”

Technoblade knew it was serious and that’s why he’d come- he had better things to do that tun back every time a pesky kid broke his arm,- but to hear Phil say that. “You didn’t think he would live?”

“It was touch and go.” Phil admitted honestly. “I... there were times his breathing was so shallow, his heart rate so unsteady... I debated trying to feed him a gapple, but I wasn’t sure I could even make him swallow it at that point and It might’ve done more harm than good.”

The voices swelled as the dread that had settled in Techno’s stomach a few days ago turned ice cold and he sat forward. “But he’s fine now, right?” The kid had always been a thorn in his side, but Technoblade still cared about him. Besides Phil and Wilbur would be destroyed if he died, even if it was just his first life.

Phil shrugged slightly “Physically? I think he’ll get there, but mentally, well, that’s why I called you Technoblade.”

“I was meanin’ to ask- what did you mean, exactly, when you said Tommy was like me?” Technoblade saw the look on Phil’s face and Technoblade leaned away “Phil, no. The kid’s human! He can’t be like me, you know that. Philza, these voices are just me. Tommy can’t have them.”

“You know just as well as I do that we don’t know that Tommy’s human.” Philza said tiredly “And I’ve tried all those arguments on myself already, but I keep coming back to that. Besides, I don’t think he’s actually like you, specifically. I think he’s seeing things. He might be hearing them too, but I don’t think he has your Chat, exactly. He just... seems to sometimes be in this other space, reacting to things I can’t see or hear.”

Technoblade shook his head, digging his sharp nails into his palms as the voices grew steadily louder. "Phil, I think you might be jumping to conclusions-"

"He jumped out a window, Technoblade." Phil said, as he sunk back into his chair "And I don;t mean an open one. I woke him up, and he was so scared, so scared of me, that he threatened me with a sword and threw himself through his closed window to get away from me. He ran into the woods and his so well that it took Wilbur and I almost a day to find him. When we finally got him home, he was unconscious but still terrified. He gave me these while I was trying to wipe the sweat off his brow."

Phil pulled down his collar to reveal several scratches running down his chest. They were already healing but Techno could tell that they had been deep- hell, they'd probably drawn blood. "Come on Phil," Tecnoblade said, and even he could hear the uncertainty in his voice "Tommy was just havin' a night terror. He probably-"

"Technoblade, please." Phil said "I could be wrong. I hope to every God I've ever heard of that I'm dead fucking wrong. But I don't know. And if I'm not wrong, you're the only person that can help him."

Technoblade shifted uncomfortably in his seat. "Phil I- I don't know anything about kids I- I don't really know if I'm the best person to help him. He probably doesn't even really remember me! and heck, I'm not always the greatest at controlling the voices, ya know. They still get really loud-" TEchnoblade winced as the voices crescendoed. Bastards liked to prove his point "And I can still sometimes get all 'ooh blood lust-y' ya know? I've killed a lot of people, too, I mean I have a pretty scary reputation. So I-"

"Technoblade, please." Phil interrupted and Technoblade could hear the desperation in Phil's tone. "I couldn't help you, you're the only one who has a shot of helping him. I... Technoblade he's terrified- he won't even look at me."

Technoblade's mind was spinning, the chat was screaming, all shouting different things. "Shut up" he whispered futility- it only served to make them louder.

Help him!

Dadza Pog!

BloodBloodBloodBloodBloodBloodBloodBlood!

Blood for the Blood God!

TraumaInnit?

Hybrid Tommy?

Dadza? Dadza!

They're only using you.

Help him!

Tommy needs you!

BloodBloodBloodBloodBloodBloodBloodBloodBloodBloodBloodBloodBloodBloodBlood

You're his brother!

Blood for the Blood God!

Potatoes!

This isn't your family

You don't help kids, not when you could be killing!

Help Him!

Kill!

Protect Tommy!

Leave!

He's your brother!

Dadza!

[illegible]

"I've got to get out of here," Techno said gruffly. He stood up abruptly, his chair scraping loudly across the floor. His hands itched for his blade. The cries for blood were multiplying

the voices merging together, and he wasn't sure that he could take it much longer, not trapped in that house.

"Technoblade," Phil called, as Techno strode for the door. he hesitated "Are-"

*"I'll be back." That was all he could promise, all he could manage beneath the screaming in his head. The Chat hadn't been so loud in **months** . They screamed for blood. They screamed for so many things.*

He left Phil standing in the door, and Techno could feel his worried gaze on his back.

Technoblade hadn't decided if he would stay yet- the night before was proof that he probably wasn't the best one to try and help someone get a handle on their mental state. He could cope, but his coping mechanism was mass murder. He was fine with that, but Philza probably didn't want him to teach Tommy that. Of course, Phil had taught Technoblade how to hold a sword and how to use it, so who knows. Maybe Phil just wanted an army.

Nah, who was he kidding? Phil would be pissed if he taught Tommy murder coping.

He walked back to the house with the game bag swinging in one hand, whistling. Tommy was probably *fine* . Phil was just being paranoid. He'd talk to the kid, try and cajole him to talk about nightmares or fever dreams or something rational and then he could go back to doing his own thing. He did, actually, have things to do. He would be here like, a week, tops. Then Tommy would be his little maniac self again, and Phil could stop worrying so much and Technoblade could leave again. Heck, maybe Phil would come with him, for old times sake. Phil would think his potato farm was awesome.

"I'm back!" he called as he barged through the back door, only to be met with immediate chaos. There was a lot of sudden movement and screaming, so naturally, he drew his sword because you don't earn the name Blood God by being unprepared for a fight. He also screamed, but in reality, it was more a shout of surprise. A war cry, if you would. He was simply asserting dominance. The Chat buzzed, but he easily brushed them off, as they were still sated enough by his earlier violence.

Then he realized it was just Phil and... Tommy? Man, the kid looked older *and* like crap. He lowered his sword "Wait, why are we screaming?"

"You busted in here mate," Philza said, with a flat expression. "It was a bit out of the blue."

Technoblade gave Phil a sheepish smile as he picked his game back up, and shut the door behind him "My bad." He turned to Tommy "My bad, kid."

Tommy didn't respond, however. The kid was still sprawled on the floor, staring up at Technoblade with wide eyes, causing Technoblade to pause mid-step. Now, Technoblade liked to think he was pretty well versed in terror since he often struck terror into people on and off the battlefield. There were all sorts of different kinds and Techno had caused most of them. The most distinctive, though, was definitely the terror that flashed across someone's face when Technoblade had his sword at their throat or his trusty crossbow leveled at their head. It was the terror of someone who knew they were about to die. Usually, Technoblade enjoyed that terror on his enemies, watching them fade away at his hand. Even when the deaths weren't real, on the battle servers, they *felt* real and the terror was real.

He did not like seeing it on Tommy's face.

Because that's what Tommy was, terrified, tangled in the chair, trying to scramble back desperately, eyes locked on Technoblade. "Tommy?" Technoblade said, not daring to take a step closer. "Do you know who I am?" Maybe the kid had actually forgotten what he looked like- it had been over a year since he'd seen Phil and probably longer since Tommy. And admittedly, he hadn't seen the kid regularly since he was a preteen. That was probably it (and no Chat, it was *fine* . They weren't really brothers anyway).

Tommy flinched at just the words (and that was even his *nice* voice!). But otherwise didn't seem to register the question. His eyes were just locked in horror on Technoblade, wide and.. Not quite unseeing, but not quite focused either. "Tommy?" Phil prodded, looking between the two of them.

"You aren't supposed to be here." Tommy finally whispered and holy crap, his voice was somehow even more terrified than his expression, "I'm sorry, I Didn't please- you-

Techno, you-I wasn't supposed- you aren't-" Tommy cut himself off, looking somehow more distraught. Ender, this kid was freaking out. Technoblade looked at Phil, to get an indication of what the heck was going on, but Phil was laser-focused on Tommy. And ok, the kid was having a grade-A freakout, so fair enough.

"Tommy are you alright, son?" Phil asked, very, very gently, like he was talking to a wounded animal. It reminded Technoblade of the voice Phil had used with him when the voices- oh. Not great.

Tommy's eyes snapped to Phil for a brief second, only marginally more clear. "Did you call him? Who am I kidding, of course, you fucking did! You called Technoblade on me!"

Techno's eyes widened. There was *bitterness* in Tommy's tone under the fear, but Technoblade had no idea why. Tommy barked a borderline hysterical laugh and Techno was almost certain he could see unshed tears glistening in the kid's eyes.

"Yeah, he called me." Techno said and Tommy's eyes were instantly back on him "He said that you... said that you were sick and he needed some help. Around the house." A weak lie, but Tommy was so freaked out he'd probably believe it. Probably. "I, uh, brought some rabbits for lunch."

Tommy just stared at him, and then, suddenly, his entire demeanor changed. Oh, the terror didn't go anywhere, not at all, but something shifted behind his and Tommy was on his feet, an obviously fake grin plastered on his face. It looked like it was seconds away from cracking. "Sorry about that, boys." he said, and Techno glanced at Phil, wondering if they were going to ignore the shake in Tommy's voice and the obvious tremors in his hands "Just got a bit startled there, and these stupid legs are a bit shaky. I just... thought someone was breaking in! Got surprised! Not every day The Blade stops by your house! But, of course, I'm not scared of you Technoblade! Just surprised!"

Tommy didn't let them get a word, rambling nervously as he edged backward on obviously unsteady legs. Techno noted that Tommy had referred to him as The Blade. That particular moniker was pretty new and he hadn't even told Phil about it! and otherwise, news didn't travel into this server. How had Tommy known that? "Not Big, T! I don't get scared! And anyway, good to see you Techno! But! I uh, hate to admit that Wilbur is right, but the bitch is. I stink. I'm-uh- I'm gonna go shower! Right now! Alone! Thanks for the food, Phil!"

With that, Tommy turned tail and practically ran up the stairs. A moment later a door slammed and the sound of water flowing could be heard in the silent kitchen. Technoblade was surprised Tommy made it up the steps, considering how bad he actually looked, and the vaguely audible rattle in his chest. He had to have one hell of an adrenaline rush.

“That was weird, right?” Technoblade said, looking at Phil, who just looked generally exhausted “Also, since when does the little monster call you Phil, instead of Dad?” Techno had thought that was really only a him thing- as long as Wilbur was still calling Phil dad (which Techno had heard him do the night before) he’d figured Tommy would too.

Phil sighed and collapsed back into his chair “He hasn’t stopped calling me dad. Or at least he hadn’t until all this started. That’s the shit I mean, techno. He isn’t well. Something is happening in that kid’s head.”

As much as Techno had really, really, really wanted Philza to be wrong, for Tommy to continue to be an annoying, but good kid, that little display... hadn’t been encouraging. He still wasn’t sold that Tommy was hallucinating or hearing voices, since Tommy had seemed at least somewhat present. He’d only addressed people that were actually, tangibly in the room and could identify those people- even if what he said made zero sense in any context Techno could think of.

“I’m still not convinced you’re right.” Techno said finally “But I do believe that the kid is in a bad place. I’m not sure how much help I’ll be, since he didn’t exactly seem thrilled to see me, but I’ll do what I can.”

“That’s all I ever ask of you, son.” Phil said, and Technoblade couldn’t help but feel a touch guilty at the tone in Phil’s voice. Philza wouldn’t have forced him to stay- he probably couldn’t have even if we wanted to, honestly.- but Techno felt bad for considering leaving when Phil was so torn up. When Tommy was obviously unwell.

He wasn’t exactly close to the kid, these days. Didn’t much think about any of them these days (despite whatever Chat said, the lying little bastards). However, Technoblade wouldn’t wish his curse gift Chat or anything like it on even his worst enemy. Certainly not on Tommy.-- Tommy was, ultimately, still a kid. He was bright, brash, and sometimes a little bastard. But Techno would never forgive himself if he walked away and Phil was right.

He owed this family at least that much.

Tommy gripped the counter tightly, forcing himself to breathe. Between the thundering of his heart and the sound water in the shower behind him drown out any noise in the house. Like Technoblade's voice.

Technoblade.

Tommy shuddered, squeezing his eyes shut. He hadn't been prepared to see him, standing there in the door. In that moment, he was certain he was going to die. When he saw the pink hair and the familiar sword, Tommy was certain that somehow the past two days had all been a lie- somehow manufactured by his brain or by Phil to convince him he was safe before Technoblade killed him for his betrayal.

It was like being in the ruins of L'Manberg, watching the withers spawn.

"If you want to be a hero, then die like one!"

It was like standing in the community house ruins, trying to choose between two sets of certain death. He could, in that moment, not see the younger version of Techno, but the one with skulls dangling from his fingers and fire bruises all around him.

Of course, that wasn't true. Techo and Phil weren't trying to kill him yet; neither of them knew what he'd done. Would do? Fucking time-travel.

Ender, he was in the past. Tommy, despite seeing irrefutable proof in more than one way, still couldn't quite believe it. It made no fucking sense. Time-travel shouldn't be real. Obviously, it fucking was possible, but he had no idea how he managed to get back in time. The last

thing he really remembered was... in the woods with Niki? That sounded about right. And after that... Well, it wasn't *nothing*. There were bits and pieces, but Tommy wasn't sure where the future (past?) ended and the past (present?) began.

All he knew was that somehow, he'd ended up fourteen again.

God, Dream didn't even know his name yet. He didn't own any discs. L'Manberg wasn't even a thought in Wilbur's mind. Phil's wings were whole. Tubbo had never been president. Fundy wasn't even a part of their lives. And the Egg, whatever the fuck that shit was, was far, far away. Tommy, this Tommy, hadn't ever taken a life.

Tommy drew in a deep breath. Everyone still had their lives.

Lives. Tommy grabbed at the hem of his shirt with clumsy fingers, pulling it up to reveal three small green hearts lined up right over the real thing. He let the shirt drop as he pressed a hand to his mouth in shock. Three lives. Holy shit, Tommy had three lives again. And all of them had their lives again. Tubbo, *Tubbo* his best friend still had all three lives and so did Wilbur. Philza had two left.

He wasn't living on borrowed time anymore. He'd been so used to it, the fear of that last heart going dark, that he hadn't even thought of it.

Tommy wasn't going to cry- he didn't cry, that was such a baby thing to do- but if he cried, it would probably be then. He managed to hold the tears back as he slid to the floor, shirt falling back into place.

He really was in the past.

Tommy was in the past. No one, not a single soul, knew that. It had to stay that way. It had to. He'd already decided that Philza couldn't know, but none of them could. If they ever found out, they'd hate him. Techno would kill him. He would ruin everything again if he ever told them.

But if he kept his mouth shut... Tommy's heart swelled with true hope for the first time since they lost the election to Schlatt. If he could keep his mouth shut, then maybe, just maybe, he could fix everything. He could prevent them from ever going to the SMP.

Tommy could fix every single mistake he'd made. He could redeem himself for all the horrible things he did. Tubbo and Wilbur would live. Phil wouldn't hate him and Techno... Techno might not want to kill him at least.

Tommy couldn't tell them, not if he wanted to fix things. He'd have to do it alone.

Technoblade was a patient man.

Tommy was avoiding him. It was pretty obvious, in Technoblade's opinion. Pretty much as soon as Technoblade entered a room Tommy was immediately searching for an out. Mostly the kid was using Tubbo, which was smart since Tubbo also seemed a little nervous around Technoblade. After Tommy took the second half of a healing potion, his strength returned in bounds and while the kid still looked a little pale, he was allowed to go outside with Tubbo, so long as they stayed within screaming distance of the house. He could've stayed with Wilbur too since Wil was also intent on avoiding him.

Technoblade normally wouldn't take offense to either of those things. What did it matter, after all? (Shut up Chat) But, Technoblade was kinda wasting time, if he wasn't actually doing what Phil had called him to do, but pushing Tommy was a bad idea. He could still see the fear simmering just beneath the surface literally every time Techno was near him. It wasn't quite the same terror, but it was obvious that Tommy wanted nothing to do with him.

So he settled for Wilbur instead, if only to piss him off while Tommy wasn't around. He was also kinda bored. Tubbo and Tommy were out, doing something, and Phil was making circles high in the sky to keep an eye on them without them knowing and Tommy getting mad.

It wasn't hard to track Wilbur down. He was usually in one of like, three places, and Techno found him on the second try, tucked up in the attic space with his guitar and book, jotting something down.

“Sup, WilburSoot.” Technoblade said, poking his head up into the small space. He’d put his crown and cloak away, and Phil had even convinced him to remove his armour while he was in the house.(He made sure that his totem was always strung around his neck, though, warm against his skin. Just in case) and was wearing an old sweater that was just a little too snug.

Wilbur jumped a little, his pen veering across the page wildly. “Fuck you.” Wilbur said, glaring up at him “You made me mess up my notes.”

“Sorry,” Technoblade said though it was obvious that there was no sincerity in his tone. He pulled himself up into the attic without invitation- he knew good and well that he wasn’t getting one from Wilbur, and settled across from him.

Wilbur’s glare didn’t soften “Do you need something?”

Technoblade rolled his eyes. Wilbur had always been blunt when he was angry. “Getting right to it then? What if I didn't want anything? Ever consider that, huh?”

Wilbur loved him with a blank look “Jeesh, alright, fine. I just wanted to talk to you Wilbur, you know, since you seemed so intent on not talking to me.”

“What if I didn't want to talk to you? Ever consider that, huh?” Wilbur snapped, mocking him with his own words.

“Rude,” Techno muttered. “Well, what if I wanted to talk to you?”

Wilbur closed his eyes “Technoblade, I genuinely am too tired for this. Dad isn’t around. You don’t have to pretend to actually care about me, or Tommy for that matter. We all know you only still here because dad managed to guilt you into it, somehow.”

Technoblade had been prepared for a fight with Wilbur, hell maybe that's why he sought him out, but Wilbur didn't fight with fists. He fought with words and Technoblade hadn't been prepared for the venom dripping from his voice and physically recoiled. The chat's volume increased suddenly.

How dare he!

Blood!

Kill him for disrespect!

Ooh snap!

The boys are fighting!

Blood!

He should pay in blood for that!

Technoblade forced the voices to the back of his mind. He did *not* need that right now.

"That was uncalled for," Technoblade said, his voice dropping to a dangerous level, calm and even "What are you talkin' about?"

"Oh come on," Wilbur said with an eye roll, his voice dripping bitterness "You haven't been home in a year, and the last time you were, it was only for a few hours. You didn't even see Tommy, since he was out playing with Tubbo. Before that, you still rarely visited. Phil would go see you. I'm surprised Tommy even remembers what you look like since you left at 16."

Technoblade clenched his hands and took a deep breath. Wilbur's tactic had been the same since they were kids- Work Technoblade up so that he'd run off and Wilbur could have the last word. It worked more often than he would like to admit. Especially because usually whatever Wilbur said was at least partially right.

And no, Technoblade hadn't been living at home regularly since he was 16- hadn't kept in good contact, but Wilbur didn't get to paint him the villain here, not solely anyway.

Technoblade was almost certain he'd never forget the night he left. He and Wilbur had screamed at each other for hours.

"You're the one who told me it was better I stayed away." Technoblade managed after a moment, and Wilbur stilled. Bingo. Technoblade smiled. It wasn't nice.

Wilbur stared at him, and storm clouds rolled behind his eyes. His voice was somehow both angry and tired "I am not having this fucking fight with you right now. I can't deal with this, not right now. " he headed for the ladder and Technoblade didn't stop him. He wasn't sure he could avoid hurting Wilbur if he touched him.

"What, are you scared to face the truth." Technoblade spat at Wilbur's retreating head.

Wilbur paused and glanced back up, eyes still stormy "No, I just don't care anymore, Technoblade. You haven't ever wanted to bring it up before and I don't want to now. We both know you'll be gone soon enough so it doesn't matter how I feel about this shit."

Technoblade didn't have anything to say to that, so he just watched Wilbur disappear down into the main house. He sighed heavily, as the anger drained out and buried his face in his hands.

Oh yeah, things were definitely going to go *great* with Tommy later. Phil had definitely picked the right guy for this job.

Chapter End Notes

I had a really long note about how much I love all the people who comment, kudos, and read but I fucked up and it's gone so just take the chapter and this instead. I love you. You all feed me my daily serotonin.

please know that I was struggling to write a 1400 word paper, so I work a 4k+ chapter fic today. how.

anyway you all rock, pls be nice, and drink some water. I'm going to sleep before I try to post the chapter in the author's notes section again.

can't slow down, can't hold back

Chapter Summary

Tubbo ponders, Phil is dense, and Tommy has a little bit of fun, for once.

Chapter Notes

Uhh I hope you enjoy? I am writing this at 3 am, so that's fun. A bit of conflict between Phil and Wilbur here, uh, a bit of comfort bc I was sad today. There is still a pretty solid bit of angst to come, so this is just a treat.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tubbo was worried about Tommy. He considered the past few days as he walked from his own home to Tommy's house, just over a large hill and some woods. They had been strange.

Tubbo knew that the others thought him a little naive. Too wrapped up in happiness and innocence to pick up on such things, but Tubbo wasn't stupid. He simply chose to be happy. Happiness wasn't stupid.

But, choosing happiness didn't mean he could ignore his friend in obvious distress. Tubbo was more than happy to spend all day with Tommy. Tommy was his best friend- had been his best friend since Tommy had found Tubbo living in a box while his guardian was away and dragged him to Philza's for the week. However, Tubbo knew that Tommy was simply using Tubbo to run away from his family.

That was usually okay too. Tubbo understood that sometimes, a person needed their space. He was happy to be that space for Tommy. But Tubbo wasn't stupid. This wasn't Tommy's normal annoyance. No, Tommy looked *afraid* of his family.

And that, in Tubbo's opinion, was simply ridiculous. Well, Tubbo could understand being afraid of Technoblade. Tommy's oldest brother was right terrifying, especially with his mask

and sword, and Tubbo didn't much care to hand 'round him either if he could help it, though the man seemed nice enough.

But, Tommy was afraid of Phil and that just... didn't make sense. Phil, when he was at home, never yelled, always made sure they were safe. Cared for. Phil was... a pretty good dad, Tubbo thought when he wasn't off on his trips. Even then Phil always brought them something from his travels. He even brought Tubbo things!

All that to say, Tubbo had no idea why Tommy was so scared of his dad all of a sudden. Or why he was no longer calling Philza dad.

He'd tried asking outright, which, Tubbo could admit, probably wasn't his smartest move. "Tommy, when did you stop calling Phil dad?"

Tommy had simply frozen in place for a moment and Tubbo was worried that he was going to run off or something. But, Tommy had just forced a smile and said "I dunno what you're talking about, T-man! I just got too old for that mushy shit, I guess. Wanna go see if we can find a fox?"

That was a horrible subject change and Tubbo didn't believe anything Tommy said, but Tubbo knew his friend. Pushing him would likely result in Tommy just shouting at him, which while Tubbo didn't mind, wasn't particularly productive.

Besides, Tubbo did like foxes, so he had allowed Tommy to lead him off into the woods just past the house.

Then, Tubbo considered, there was the Wilbur issue. Tommy wasn't scared of Wilbur. At least, not like he was scared of Phil or Technoblade. But, Tommy got this horribly sad expression on his face every time he looked at Wilbur for too long, and sometimes Tubbo was certain there were tears in his eyes. But, Wilbur had shouted at Tommy the night before- not even really angry, just teasing about something or another, maybe explosions or something- when Tommy froze up. Tubbo didn't think Wilbur noticed, or perhaps Wilbur ignored it, but there had been a flash of panic in Tommy's eyes, which just didn't quite sit right with Tubbo.

Something had happened, more than anyone was telling him, and he didn't like it. Tommy was his best friend. He deserved to know what was going on! But, even though he was older than Tommy, the adults treated him like a kid. They wouldn't tell him. At least not Phil or Wilbur. He had no idea what Technoblade would do or wouldn't do, but again, Tubbo was a bit scared of the man. He was huge!

However, the issue with that was getting Tommy himself to admit anything was wrong. Tommy was... a bit closed off if nothing else. Tubbo was certain, however, that he could get Tommy to open up. He wasn't his best friend for nothing. Privately he considered himself the world's foremost Tommy expert and was certain he could get Tommy to admit what was wrong.

He even had a plan!

"You know." Tubbo said, conversationally to Tommy who was already a little nervous looking "I think today is a beautiful day."

"Of course you fucking would," Tommy grumbled, but Tubbo knew that Tommy wasn't angry. Tommy had very distinctive yells- Tubbo had learned that long ago- and this one was simply just his normal grumpy. "It's pissing snow."

"That isn't an expression," Tubbo said lightly. "And the snow is pretty."

"It's cold." Tommy countered, crossing his arms "And I've been ill! You're dragging an ill man out into the fucking snow!"

"This was your idea, Tommy." Tubbo pointed out with a laugh "You wanted to sit on the roof. "

Tommy muttered some curse words under his breath and Tubbo laughed again. Tommy seemed most himself these days when it was just the two of them. Except when Tommy gave the weird sad look to him. He hadn't done it today, but he'd caught Tommy doing it twice the day before.

It was strange, how different Tommy seemed, yet still the same. Tubbo allowed silence to fall between them. That was his plan, to be honest. Tommy... wasn't good at silence. The guy liked to talk, even to himself. Tubbo found it comforting, even when he didn't have to say anything. It just reminded him that his best friend was there and wanted to talk to him. So, he figured that if he let Tommy ramble long enough, he might accidentally tell him something. It wasn't the best plan, but asking Tommy outright was almost impossible unless Tommy was in a sharing mood.

Tubbo chanced a glance over at Tommy. No, his friend wasn't in a freely sharing mood. Based on the glower on his face.

"I miss my window," Tommy said suddenly, and Tubbo has a smile. "I guess I jumped out of it or some shit, but I want it back, you know? It just gets so dark in my room, and even though I'm fine Wilbur and Phil keep making me go to bed early, but I still don't have my window. It makes it hard to keep track of time too. When I wake up it's just dark, the same damn level of light all the fucking time. It drives me nuts. It's like being back in fucking Pog-"

Tommy cut himself off, shutting his mouth with an audible click. Tubbo frowned. They'd been getting somewhere, finally, (because Tubbo had noticed how nervous Tommy had gotten in the dark room the night before, eyes wandering to where the window should be) and Tommy stopped. It didn't make sense, either. Tommy'd always had a window.

"It reminds you of what, Tommy?" Tubbo prodded gently, hoping that his friend would answer the hopefully innocent question.

Instead, Tommy just glared. "Nothing. It reminds me of nothing. Just... just a nightmare." Tubbo couldn't help the surprised oh that escaped his lips. He knew Tommy had been having nightmares- Wilbur had told him as much- but he was surprised to hear Tommy himself admit it, much less that something had scared him.

“Can you tell me what it’s about? Or you could tell Wilbur. Sometimes he listens to my nightmares!” Tubbo suggested brightly. Wilbur always listened, when Tubbo asked him too. Phil probably would listen too, but Tubbo wasn’t sure. So, Wilbur was his go-to, if Tommy didn’t want to listen.

“No!” Tommy snapped, whirling to face Tubbo. Tubbo flinched back, not just at the sudden movement, but at the anger on Tommy’s face. “No, Tubbo I-I don’t want to talk about it, and Wilbur, Wilbur can’t ever fucking know about that nightmare. It’s stupid anyway.” Tubbo couldn’t help but notice the way Tommy’s voice wavered, like he might actually cry.

Tommy hopped to his feet. “I don’t want to talk about this anymore. It’s fucking stupid. Let’s go do something else.” He wasn’t angry anymore, but Tubbo could see the tension in Tommy’s shoulders. There wasn’t much else he could do, now that Tommy was all clamed up.

“Okay.” Tubbo agreed, slowly getting to his feet. “Want to build a snow fort? We can give it a cool basement and everything! And make snow animals to go in it!”

Tommy stared at him for a moment and it was a strange expression- it was almost like the one he’d given Wilbur- before giving Tubbo a grin “We can make a snow castle! We can make the best fucking snow fort ever.”

Tommy wasn’t ok. Tubbo would have to revoke his own best friend card if he believed that, but he wasn’t too worried.

Even if Tommy’s family was a little scattered, Tubbo was still there and eventually, Tommy would tell him what was wrong. And, even if he didn’t Tubbo would be there. He’d always been told by his guardian that he good at much, but Tubbo was sure he was good at being a friend.

He would help Tommy. Unfortunately, that meant he might need more help than he thought. And Technoblade seemed to be the way to do it, and for Tommy? Tubbo would work with Technoblade.

Phil watched from the back window and Tommy and Tubbo started building... something out of snow in the backyard. Part of him wanted Tommy inside, where it was warm, but the kid was healing pretty well. He no longer wobbled when he walked, and according to Tommy, his chest didn't hurt.

The terrible coughs he could hear in the morning begged to differ, but Phil, unfortunately, still had to tread carefully around Tommy. His son was still a terrible liar, but he was obstinate. And now, he'd chosen to be stubborn about not only how he felt, but about what was going on in his head.

It had been almost three days since Phil had managed to explain to him what had happened- at least about the first part- and now Tommy was avoiding him like the plague. He was still scared, but as scared as he was of Phil, it was obvious he was ten times more scared of Technoblade.

Outside his outburst on that first day, there had been no other issue. However, the moment Technoblade entered a room, Tommy was searching for a way out of it. He rarely spent more than fifteen minutes in a room with tEchnoblade and perhaps worse than the fear was the guilt. Tommy was... well, he was Tommy. The gremlin was always into something, and usually something he wasn't supposed to be. And normally, it didn't bother the kid, much to Phil's chagrin, but if Tommy truly messed up, his guilt was easy to read.

And Tommy was guilty. But Phil had no fucking clue why. Just like he had no idea why Tommy was calling him Phil instead of dad, or why he was scared of his own shadow, or what he saw when he looked at Wilbur that made him sad. Or why Phil still woke up to the sound of Tommy screaming. He'd gone up there only once, in the last few days, only to find Wilbur already there. He hadn't bothered getting up after that, because really, Tommy didn't want to talk. wHat could he do?

Phil had no idea and it was driving him insane.

Technoblade wasn't having much luck either, and Phil was worried about him too. He wasn't sure that TEchnoblade had slept since he'd arrived (though he knew his eldest had to have slept, he still hadn't seen it.) and Technoblade was constantly out, doing something when he wasn't trying to corner Tommy. Phil wasn't even sure if Technoblade was trying though.

Ender, Phil wanted a break. His wings itched for the open skies and different terrain. He wanted nothing more than to just.. Fly off. Adventure like he hadn't in years. He hadn't left the homestead in almost a year, due to one thing or another. He'd been planning a trip, perhaps, to see Technoblade, if only for a week or so, but that was of course off the table now that Technoblade was home.

Phil still wanted to get away.

He pushed those thoughts away. Maybe if Tommy recovered well enough, he'd be able to leave Tommy with Wilbur for a few weeks. Wilbur had always been responsible enough, always mature. And honestly, Wilbur was probably closer to Tommy than Phil himself. Phil credited that to Wilbur being the one to find Tommy. He and Technoblade and been on a trip into the Nether, since Technoblade had been begging to go and threatening to go alone. Wilbur hadn't wanted to go, and at 11, the kid was old enough that he could be alone for a few nights, with strict rules on staying in the house unless absolutely necessary.

However, time sometimes worked differently in the Nether than on the Overworld, and there was little he could do about it since clocks didn't work and time otherwise seemed to pass normally. Phil thought they'd only been gone three days, however, when he returned Wilbur was half an inch taller than when they left, and a small blonde child was shouting at them from behind Wilbur.

It had been almost a month, Wilbur informed them. And the child was Tommy. Wilbur had found him in the nearest village (Phil nearly had a stroke, thinking of the four-mile round-trip between the two that Wilbur must've made on his own), and he had no family left and was living in a tree. He was their new brother.

Phil had instantly decided the child would stay the second he set eyes on him, but he'd let Wilbur make his pitch, before assuring Wilbur that Tommy was welcome to stay as long as he wanted. Of course, Tommy never left. He remembered it took another few months for Tommy to warm up to Phil and Techno, but he had always followed Wilbur around like a lost puppy.

As much as Tommy denied it, Phil could tell it was true. It was kinda sweet, minus when Wilbur did idiotic things and dragged Tommy along with him.

Phil was almost certain that one day, his second life was going to just disappear due to the stress of his children, despite how much he cared for them.

But, regardless, as much as Phil ached for travel, he simply couldn't leave right now.

The front door opened and shut resolutely. The footsteps were too light for Technoblade and Phil could still see Tommy and Tubbo, so it had to be Wilbur. "Wil!" he called, not taking his eyes off the younger boys. "Come here a minute."

Phil heard a small sigh and turned as Wilbur entered the kitchen, beanie pulled low on his head. "Morning son." Phil greeted. "Have you seen Technoblade?"

Wilbur scoffed "Of course that's what you want to ask." he mumbled, Phil only able to make it out due to his enhanced hearing "I dunno. I've got no idea what he does- you probably have a better guess than me."

Phil blinked in surprise at the bitterness in Wilbur's tone. "What's that suppose to mean?" Phil tried to keep his tone neutral but winced as it sounded a bit sarcastic even to his own ears.

Wilbur rolled his eyes. "Please, Dad. I really don't want to talk about this right now. I sincerely have no clue where Technoblade is. I haven't seen him since yesterday afternoon late. I went out and when I came back he was gone. I think I heard him in his room after I went to bed last night, but I have no idea. I'm sure he's fine though. You don't have to worry about the great *Technoblade*."

Phil sat his mug down, squinting at his son, who was absolutely livid. "Wilbur, what the hell are you talking about?"

Wilbur let out a laugh that wasn't happy. "I already told you, I really don't want to talk about it dad. Ender, you are Techno are just alike."

Phil still wasn't exactly sure what Wilbur was talking about- where all the hostility towards Technoblade, towards him, was coming from. His two eldest had always had their differences, especially after Technoblade started traveling on his own. Especially once Technoblade started distancing himself from the family. It certainly hurt, just a little, that Technoblade no longer called him dad, but he could live with it. He also knew that the traveling had sparked some sort of fight between the two, but he'd assumed it was solved by now- it had been almost six years!

"Wilbur, come on now, you can't just-"

"If you don;t get it by now, you probably won't" Wilbur snapped cutting him off, then took a deep breath. "Look, just drop it, dad. I... I'm over it. I don't care. I'm sorry for yelling. Is there anything else you need me to do?"

Phil should probably force Wilbur to talk about it. That would be the smart thing to do, right? Wilbur obviously wasn't fucking over whatever it was he claimed he didn't care about, probably whatever fight Technoblade and Wilbur had all those years ago. Neither of them had ever told him exactly what happened. But... Phil was tired. Tommy was losing his mind, Wilbur had been injured and was now angry, and Technoblade being home only introduced a whole new dimension to their issues. Phil was tired. So he just sighed. "No, son. I don't. You can go on."

Wilbur had relaxed some, but Phil would have to be blind to miss the tension in his son's shoulders."Alright. I'm going to go see what Tubbo and Tommy are building." Wilbur said tersely. He didn't wait for Phil to respond before stomping out the back door.

Phil groaned, his wings slumping against the counter. What the hell was that about?

Tommy had *fun* , building the snow fort.

He'd allowed himself to get caught up in the designing and the packing of the snow fort, which it seemed like there was no shortage of. It wasn't a grand building like some of the

homes he'd made on the SMP, or like the Snowchester builds Tubbo had taken on recently. Would take on? Fuck, it didn't matter, Tommy decided, forcefully shoving future thoughts away. He's already fucked up once and nearly mentioned Pogtopia to Tubbo, which would have been literally the worst thing he could have done. He'd only been trying to keep things a secret for like, three days, and he was already fucking it up.

Great.

But, he'd built the fort with Tubbo, then Wilbur showed up and had built his own little shelter and started a snowball fight.

An enderdamned snowball fight. Tommy hadn't done those in years- he was certain that i had to be before the SMP, and even then, he couldn't quite place the last time. But, Wilbur's shoulder had pretty well healed and he was putting it to good use, chucking snowballs at him at Tubbo. Wilbur didn't look like it, but he had really good fucking aim.

Tommy, did too, though. And, apparently, despite his body being smaller and weaker than the one he'd gotten used to (and recently ill!), it was also technically healthier. He was no longer littered in scars and he'd realized that morning that now that he'd pretty much recovered from his apparent coma, his knees didn't hurt all the time, from the sheer amount of fall damage he'd taken in the future. And, the constant dull ache in his right arm from a poorly heal arrow wound was gone.

Maybe most noticeable was the fact that he could now hear the birds clearly. He could hear them, even as he huddled behind the fort, making snowballs with Tubbo, far louder than he had in years.

Who knew that repeated exposure to explosives could fuck your hearing up, even with healing potions?

Tommy was drawn out of his thoughts by a snowball splattering against his head. He yelped, realized he'd leaned a bit too far out of the fort while gathering fresh ammunition as he pulled his head back in.

Wilbur's laugh echoed across the open field, taunting them. "I'm hit!" Tommy cried dramatically (he didn't think of all the times he'd yelled that when it wasn't funny. All the times his friends had screamed it. He didn't think of that. Couldn't. He was having *fun*)
"Avenge me Tubbo!"

Tubbo rolled his eyes a bit but laughed "I'll get you for this, Wilbur!" Tubbo cried, though there was an unmistakable note of laughter to it. Tubbo launched a snowball at Wilbur and it hit the taller man square in the face, causing him to shout in surprise and fall backward into the snow.

Tommy laughed, as he launched his own snowball, though he wasn't sure it hit. He froze, however, as a new laugh joined theirs. It was dry but loud and it took every ounce of self-control in Tommy's body to keep from completely freezing as Technoblade emerged from the woods. Their laughter died off, as Tommy and Tubbo shared a look.

"Getting beat by some little kids, Wilby?" Technoblade called, either ignoring or not noticing the tone change "Cringe!"

Tommy could see Wilbur's face scrunch up. Tommy had forgotten that Wilbur and Technoblade didn't really get along at this point- Wilbur had been so absorbed in his insanity that Tommy wasn't even sure he remembered that he and Technoblade were brothers once. (He wasn't sure that in the end, Wilbur remembered that Tommy was his brother too) .

Wilbur looked like he was going to respond, but Tubbo, surprisingly, spoke first. "You should join us, Technoblade! Or, Wilbur! He needs help! He's got noodle arms. We're demolishing him."

Wilbur halfway looked like he wanted to protest the idea and Tommy thought Techno was going to, but apparently, Tubbo, the innocent-looking bastard, managed to give them a puppy dog look that Tommy had to admit was effective as hell and Technoblade grinned. "Eh, why not? Destroying my enemies is my favorite pass time."

It was a joke. Tommy knew it was a joke.

Didn't do much for the fucking panic building in his chest, though.

"You alright, mate?" Tubbo asked quietly, as Tommy sank down below the walls of the fort. The cold snow under his skin felt good. Grounding.

"Oh Tubbo." Tommy forced himself to groan dramatically "You've sentenced us to our death! Death at the hands of The Blade"

He hoped Tubbo heard more humor in that statement than Tommy felt about it.

"Nah," Tubbo said "Come on! We're unbeatable together! Besides, They're too distracted fighting each other to worry about us! We need to launch an attack."

Tommy really just wanted to run away, but that wasn't exactly productive, nor would it convey to anyone that he was fine, so he forced himself back up, to find that Tubbo was right. Techno and Wilbur were bickering over their fort's walls, Wilbur claiming Techno needed to build his own walls.

"There isn't enough room in here." Wilbur insisted loudly, arms crossed "You need to build your own extension."

"There's room right there!" Techno exclaimed loudly, pointing to a pretty large empty spot beside Wilbur "Bro, it's *right there!*"

"Make your own." Wilbur said stubbornly "I'm going to put snowballs there. For storage."

"Dud, I'm on your team, come on-"

Tubbo let a snowball launch while they weren't looking, and it landed smack against Techno's face just as Tommy's connected with Wilbur's. Tubbo froze and Tommy couldn't

help the slight flash of panic as Techno reached up slowly, ever so slowly, to wipe the snow off his face.

He moved before he could think- before the panic could take over, before he thought about the festival , launching another snowball at Techno himself, before rapidly throwing one at Wilbur. Both hit their mark and Technoblade finally just dove for cover beside Wilbur, who was finally smart enough to duck down.

Wilbur squawked in protest, but Technoblade was a force of nature and Tommy could just the top of Techno's pink hair beside Wilbur's brown hair.

"Hah!" Tommy called, trying to be far braver than he felt "Got both of you bitches! You can handle how great we are!"

"Yeah!" Tubbo called, finally daring to pop back up over the edge of the fort, emboldened by Tommy's words "We're going to demolish you!"

"Listen," Tommy heard Techno say "We need to unite against a common enemy- the children! We can't let 'em keep gettin' away with this!"

"You know what?" And Tommy knew Wilbur wanted them to hear it, which was never good. "I think you're right. These gremlins need to get knocked down a peg or two."

Tommy looked at Tubbo with wide eyes. "Oh no." Tubbo whispered, "I think we've made a mistake."

--

They had, in fact, made a mistake.

Tommy had forgotten just how efficient of a team Wilbur and Techno could be when they weren't lighting and Wilbur wasn't going insane. He and Tubbo had pretty much gotten destroyed after those first two hits, and eventually, their fort had been overrun. Tommy wasn't proud of it, but seeing Techno jump over their fort, tusks gleaming, arms raised had caused him to scream like a little girl.

He'd been about two seconds from drawing his sword (which would have been just as effective as his fists, since it was still fucking wood) , because he could only see L'manberg and the withers, but then Tubbo had laughed, through his shouts, and that had brought Tommy back to reality just as a huge snowball crashed down over both their heads.

Ender that was fucking sappy.

Regardless, Tommy had actually managed to laugh, if only for a few moments after that, cold, wet, tired, but just, for a split second, he'd been laughing with Tubbo to his left, while Technoblade and Wilbur claimed victory, even as Tommy threw half-hearted fists of snow at them.

For a split second, he'd been fucking happy.

Then, Phil called them for dinner and the moment was broken. Wilbur's smile slipped away as he muttered something to Technoblade that Tommy couldn't hear. Technoblade's own expression fell, as Tommy was reminded why Technoblade was scary as fuck.

Tubbo chattered beside Tommy as they walked back to the house, Wilbur several steps ahead, and Technoblade still a few steps behind, but Tommy didn't hear a word.

He had to remember what he was here for. It wasn't snowball fights. He needed to make plans. He needed to preserve his family. He needed to keep things from going belly up. He didn't have time for fun. He needed to make sure that he didn't fuck everything up again. Tommy wouldn't let himself ruin his family again.

I was going to address my view on Phil and Tommy but I got tired so basically this. Phil is trying to be a good dad. It does not exactly happen always. He is not purposefully bad tho.

Tommy was manipulated but he also made bad choices. He desperately needs some therapy, but that will include actual self-reflection that isn't self-loathing but still allows him to acknowledge bad decisions he made.

I do not want debate on that in my comments pls this is my comfort content and I promise that the characters will be fixed and everything will be fine. Everyone will be happy in the end.

On a different note, I have a second fic I'm working on. It will be much shorter than this one, but it's still SBI content so go check it out. I will self-promo. I have no shame here.

Anyway, lmk what you think! I apologize for not responding to everyone's comments but I Physically Cannot bc my brain just shuts down. I love all of you though! Have a happy Valentine's day even though I'm a few hours late.

Uhh I put way too much in this my b.

look me in my eyes, tell me everything's not fine

Chapter Summary

Technoblade and Tommy have a chat.

Chapter Notes

I am bad at writing fight scenes and it shows.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Technoblade frowned as he sharpened his golden sword, methodically drawing the whetstone up and down the sword. It was one of his least favorite swords in actuality and he wasn't sure the last time he'd used it. When he had his enchanted Netherite sword and a regular diamond sword on backup, he had no use for the gold sword. But, sometimes he just *craved* the feeling of a blade in his hands and the act of sharpening a weapon was meditative, even relaxing while still close enough to violence that it satisfies his more.. bloody tendencies.

Sharpening a sword took precision though- too much and it would fall apart, or ruin the balance. So, he kept his gold sword on him for the express purpose of sharpening. Hey, a guy had to have his hobbies, and people generally preferred that over stabbing, so when he couldn't stab his problems, he sharpened his sword. He spent many hours sharpening the gold sword when he was fighting the potato war.

And, unfortunately, he couldn't stab this problem.

Well, he could. Technically. But he wouldn't! It would, if nothing else, piss Phil off if he shish-kebaped Wilbur. Besides, Techno didn't really want to stab Wilbur. Not much. Maybe just a little. Not enough to kill him, just enough to... No! He wouldn't stab Wilbur. Even after yesterday. Technoblade thought that maybe Wilbur had just been a bad mood in the attic- he'd always been prone to moody outbursts- and had come down from his little hissy fit after the snowball fight. He thought it had been a real bondin' moment or something.

“Just like old times, eh? Except I wasn’t pummeling you.” Technoblade said, clapping a hand on Wilbur’s shoulder, fixing the taller man with a grin. Wilbur’s face had twisted into a frown as he shrugged off Technoblade’s hand.

“This doesn’t change anything, Technoblade. I meant what I said yesterday. I just don’t care anymore.” Wilbur had simply shrugged, not sounding angry, just tired, which was somehow worse. “Now come on. Dad wouldn’t want to eat without you.”

Technoblade had just watched Wilbur walk towards the house, Tubbo and Tommy behind him, resisting the urge to scream in frustration. What was Wilbur’s problem?

Not even with the encouragement of half the Chat. The other half was backing him up at least, either insisting he yell at him or go talk it out, which ugh, were boring, *feeling* options. Technoblade was personally going to try and ignore the situation until he dealt with Tommy and could then skedaddle. They’d been ignoring what was apparently a major issue for some time now (even though Technoblade hadn’t realized it was quite such a big issue- and no Chat he wasn’t lying!) and it would be fine to keep ignoring it. Technoblade, as much as he liked visiting, really did have better things to do than play house. Besides, the voices never stopped demanding things- things that Technoblade couldn’t give them here. Not without losing things he wasn’t willing to.

And, okay, back to sharpening, because who needed deep thought like that?

Cringe! Aww, Technoblade cares. Feelings? Blood!

“Very helpful Chat, as usual.” He muttered, angrily allowing the sword to fall back into his inventory, as he discarded the whetstone back into Phil’s chest in the basement. The sharpening wasn’t doing enough to distract him. He needed the rush of real combat, or, at least something similar to distract him. Adrenaline always helped the Chat align itself.

But it was hours until nightfall and there were no mobs nearby to destroy unless he wanted to risk going into the mine or reactivating Phi’s nether portal, which would also require some digging, neither of which he really wanted to do, honestly.

His eyes slid across the storage space in the basement until they locked on the sturdy wooden and stone practice swords Phil had made them years ago. They still looked to be in good condition, resting against a far wall. He'd seen Tommy with a newer wooden one, but the ones in the basement looked like they hadn't been touched in ages- probably not since Technoblade himself had left home.

Maybe it was time to break those out again. Technoblade picked up two of the stone ones, weighing them in his hand. They weren't his usual weapons, and the balance was off, but they would do. It was still a weapon, as dull and ineffective as they were, and even a fake fight would help soothe his nerves.

He easily climbed the ladder and pushed the trapdoor up, hoisting himself into the edge of the kitchen. Phil wasn't in there and he couldn't hear any movement from the living area, so he was probably outside. Technoblade grabbed his cloak since it was cold outside. The snow wasn't terribly deep, especially not with the path he'd helped Phil shovel the day before, and it had stopped snowing, but it was still chilly, even for a hybrid like him, so until he could get his blood pumping, he wanted the fur-lined cloak.

It wasn't hard to spot Phil, who appeared to be clearing more snow. His green and white bucket hat and black wings stuck out against the stark white snow that coated the ground.

"Phil!" Technoblade called, and the man turned around, waving "Want to spar?"

"Better than clearing snow!" Phil said, letting his shovel drop, as he made his way towards Technoblade, who was standing in what had always been their makeshift sparring arena. It wasn't much, but there was a semi-circle of trees planted on one side to act as a barrier and a raised ledge of cobblestone on the other, creating a defined circle to prevent it from becoming a chase rather than a fight. There was only a thin layer of snow on the ground, thanks to the thick canopy of trees above, only the semi-frozen ground underneath his boots.

"Now, I haven't sparred with anyone in a while." Phil said as he took the stone sword from Technoblade "Well, besides training Tommy. And while he's very good for his age..." Phil grimaced instead of finishing the sentence.

"It isn't really a fight." Technoblade offered. It wasn't rude. The kid was, what 13? 14? Whatever he was still young. Technoblade had been good at that age, but he was the

exception. And even then, Phil still beat him more than half the time. It wasn't until he hit his growth spurt at 15 that Technoblade had really started beating Phil regularly.

"Just know I'm out of practice," Phil warned.

"Do you want me to go easy on you, old man?" Technoblade teased lightly, as he pulled his own sparring sword out of his inventory.

Phil scoffed "Hardly. I've been itching for a real fight for ages. And last I heard, you hadn't been doing too much fighting yourself- what, spending' all your time farming potatoes?"

Technoblade snorted a laugh "Hey, it was a potato *war* Phil. I've been fightin' with my mind. Doesn't mean I can't go find someone to spar with."

Technoblade hadn't actually fought anyone in his potato war- a fact he was more than just a little proud of- but he had made regular trips to competition servers to get his fill of sparing. It was how he burned off steam.

"Well, we will see who is more out of practice," Phil said with a grin, then without warning, he lunged.

See, Technoblade hadn't known it until he was 11, but Philza had a bit of a reputation in some circles. That reputation? The Angel of Death. Technoblade hadn't understood it as a kid. Phil wore stupid sweaters, told bad jokes, and rescued baby birds. Phil was far from the angel of Death, even when he was fighting mobs.

But, when he saw his father truly fight for the first time in the Nether, he understood. It hadn't changed much since then. When Phil entered the zone, his normally happy expression twisted into something like terrifyingly calm determination. The huge black wings that towered over him only added effect.

Technoblade was used to that, however, and he easily side-stepped Phil's first lunge, only a whisper of feathers brushing against his arm. "Trying to get a jump on me old man? Gotta try harder than that." Techno taunted, and Phil grinned, which Technoblade couldn't help but return, as they moved back into battle.

It was easy to lose himself in the fight. Phil was his oldest sparring partner and when they fought, it was familiar. He'd learned all his basic form and technique from Phil and more than a few advanced moves. However, Technoblade didn't fight exactly like Phil- he couldn't. Phil didn't rely on his wings- that would be too easy of a weakness to explicit- but he used them as an advantage that Technoblade couldn't replicate. But, Technoblade had learned from Piglin and had spent years fighting on countless servers, spilling real and fake blood. He had a few techniques of his own- tricks Phil hadn't taught him.

But, despite the familiarity, Phil was simply a good fighter. Technoblade wasn't actually sure how old Phil was, but he'd been fighting long before Technoblade was born, and Techno was sure that he'd be dead wrong if Phil had moves he hadn't shown Technoblade.

But, the surprises made their spars fun, as did the familiarity. The Chat fell in line as he fought, providing mostly helpful tips, or just cheering him on. Mercifully, there were few calls for blood.

They both landed hits, albeit measured ones that wouldn't do more than bruise at most, and took them in equal measure. There were times Techno was certain he'd lost, and was going to have to eat his pride, only to spot an opening that allowed him to get his edge back and times he was certain he had Phil backed into a corner when the older man managed to somehow get out of it and land a few more hits.

It was just fun. The blade sang in his hands as he whirled it. At some point he discarded his cloak, tossing it off into the corner of the ring, and Phil lost his hat after narrowly avoiding one of Technoblade's hits.

He wasn't sure how long exactly they sparred- when he was fighting, time meant nothing- but eventually, he managed to knock Phil's sword away from him and had him on the ground, sword leveled at his throat. Phil bowed his head slightly and cracked a grin. "Guess I am out of practice."

Technoblade lowered his sword and grinned, offering Phil a hand to help him up. “Seems like it. You did give me a run for my money though, old man.”

“Stop calling me old,” Phil said, even as he allowed Technoblade to help him to his feet. “I’m not that old!”

“Sure you aren’t.” Technoblade said, and Phil rolled his eyes, and muttered something that sounded suspiciously like ‘kids’. Technoblade would ignore that, in favor of the small audience that he had just noticed.

Tommy was standing just at the edge of the tree line, wrapped in his warm clothes, staring at them. He probably thought that they couldn’t see him, but Technoblade was more observant than the average guy- came with the territory of people constantly trying to kill you for one reason or another.

Tommy had always been interested in fighting, from what Technoblade could remember. When they were kids, he would constantly harass Technoblade about training, or sparring with him every time he was home. He wasn’t sure when that stopped. Heh, probably when he stopped coming home.

But, the kid would probably still want to spar with him, right? Technoblade hadn’t done it much with Tommy as a kid, because Tommy was so small and kinda bad at fighting. Technoblade couldn’t really spar with him, and pretty much only did so when Phil guilted him into it or when Tommy was being a particularly annoying nine-year-old. A few faint bruises wouldn’t hurt him and the kid needed an ego check. He wasn’t sure it ever sunk in though, because the kid always came back for more, even when Technoblade said no. Chat, for once, seemed to be in general consensus that it was probably a good idea. Which, okay, Chat’s agreement wasn’t *always* the best measure of ‘good idea’ but they were helpful sometimes.

The kid would think it was fun, right? He needed to get Tommy comfortable around him so that they could talk (he’d seen Tommy’s face yesterday, right before he’d dropped that last snowball, and for just a second the kid was definitely seeing something that wasn’t there- something that scared him), and even Tubbo, who was also scared of him, had cornered him yesterday after the snowball fight and whispered in hushed tones that he was worried about Tommy and that someone needed to help him. Apparently, he too thought Technoblade could

help. He had no idea why all these people thought he was any good for the job. But, he supposed he had to at least give it an honest try, before telling Phil it hadn't worked.

Sparring always helped him, anyway. It would definitely work for Tommy, right? The kid always talked about being a big man, so it made sense. Right? "Hey, Tommy!" Technoblade called, waving at him "Wanna spar with me?"

Tommy really, really, really didn't want to spar with Technoblade. Like, not at all. He'd just watched Technoblade and Phil go crazy, beating the shit out of each other, and Tommy could remember all the times that Techno had trained him in his exile. It had been... brutal, at times. It had been helpful though when it came down to it. When it came to killing Dream .

And shit, he'd been staring too long, and he remembered wanting to spar with Techno so bad, before... well, before, so how could he say no? He couldn't. "Techno, I don't know if-" Philza started and Tommy knew he was going to try and stop this- call Tommy weak. Tommy wasn't He survived wars and fucking time traveled. Besides, he needed this Technoblade to like him. This would help, right? He'd decided the night before when he was desperately trying for sleep, that the easiest way to keep everyone safe and alive was to keep them from leaving. If Phil left again, Tommy wasn't sure he could keep Wilbur away from the SMP eventually and if Technoblade left with no intent to return, Phil would follow, just like last time.

So, he needed Technoblade to stay around, for that reason alone. (It had nothing to do with Tommy missing Techno- missing those months at his cottage either because he fucking didn't) Which, considering Phil hadn't been able to make that happen, and Tommy was pretty sure that Techno found him annoying at best, it wouldn't be easy to get Technoblade to come around. That meant if Technoblade was offering anything- Tommy had to take it.

So Tommy swallowed his dread and forced a grin "Sure!" he said, cutting Phil off. He stepped into the arena and shed his thick coat. The cold winter air bit at his exposed skin, and Tommy repressed a shiver. His coat was too bulky- it wouldn't allow him enough freedom of movement to spar. Besides, Technoblade was wearing a short-sleeved shirt and seemed fine. He could handle it. "I gotta warn you, I'm pretty fucking good at this shit. Don't go easy on me"

Tommy could literally see the skepticism on Technoblade's face and Phil looked like he wanted to intervene. Tommy wasn't stupid. He knew that he had absolutely zero fucking chance of beating Technoblade in PvP, even a Technoblade that was over two years less experienced than the one he remembered. But, being cocky was his thing. It was all about presentation, even if he got his ass kicked.

Technoblade grinned and it was a little bit patronizing, which only made Tommy glare harder. "If you say so, kid."

"Please don't break anything, I just got him back on his feet," Phil called, from where he was perched on the cobblestone wall.

"I make no promises," Tommy called and even though he wasn't looking at Phil, he could hear the eye roll. Technoblade just laughed and he passed Tommy a stone sword.

The weight was somewhat unfamiliar in his hands but far better than the stupid wooden sword that he'd been stuck with for the last few days. The stone was obviously dull- probably had never been sharpened, but it was at least weighted like a real sword, rather than a piece of fucking wood. He missed his real sword and his trident, the way his sword fit into his hands, balanced perfectly and sharpened to a deadly point.

But, the stone sword was better than nothing, at least.

He took a few steps back, and before Phil could call start, Technoblade was already moving.

Technoblade, despite his size, was fast. Tommy, however, was faster, since he didn't have shoulders the size of a fucking tree, and managed to narrowly dodge Technoblade's first swing. He tightened his hands on his sword, to hide the tremors in his fingers. This felt too familiar for comfort.

He launched himself out of the way, rolling on the cold ground, coming up into a crouch. Technoblade was already back towards him, bringing his sword up towards Tommy's side, but

Tommy managed to block the hit, deflecting the blade to the side, before bringing his up towards Techno's arm. His sword was battled away almost gently, and Techno for Tommy's chest, but Tommy easily sidestepped it.

That was an obvious move- Technoblade was going easy on him. Tommy scowled. Tommy wanted a real fight. So, rather than Give Technoblade a chance to even turn around, Tommy charged forward, using his leg to try and swipe Techno's legs from under him. It didn't exactly work, but it put him off balance enough that Tommy managed to land a hit on his side, as Techno spun to face him.

Something changed in Technoblade's face, and suddenly, he was moving much faster and Tommy felt his eyes widen. He wasn't going easy on Tommy anymore. It didn't make Tommy happy exactly- no, he knew what it was like to face The Blade in combat and this was far more like it. It was just a little too close to standing on the edge of what was once L'Manberg, torn between fear and rage. Tommy couldn't help but let his eyes slide to Philza for a second, despite the danger of taking his eyes off of his opponent. He had to be sure. Had to make sure that this- Phil was simply standing to the side, watching with concern. He wouldn't be spawning Withers. Somehow, that helped, even if he could still taste ash in his mouth.

Tommy met Technoblade's relentless assault as best he could, but he was mostly just playing defense now. His arms ached and his legs shook with the exertion of keeping Techno from landing most of his powerful blows. He tried to disarm Technoblade in a move that Techno himself had taught Tommy, in the future obviously, but while he knew how to do it, he'd lost years of training and muscle memory, and his own sword went flying across the arena instead of Technoblade. Stupid weak body, with shaky arms and no real training.

A second later he was on his back, sword at his throat. Tommy swallowed hard. It wasn't real. The sword was dull. It couldn't hurt him. They weren't going to kill him. This wasn't L'Manberg. This wasn't Doomsday. This wasn't Dream. This wasn't real. Technoblade wouldn't hurt him yet. He had no reason to hurt him. He was safe. He was safe. He was fine. He wasn't going to die.

“-good?”

Tommy opened his eyes to find Technoblade and Phil crouched over him, which did not help the panic he was holding at bay. Tommy scrambled back a few steps and jumped ot his feet.

He cleared his throat and took a steadying breath before trusting himself to speak without saying something monumentally stupid.

“Sorry,” Tommy said, letting a nervous laugh leak out. “Just had the fucking wind knocked out of me a bit, nothing that Big Man TommyInnit can’t handle! “

Technoblade accepted the explanation without question, despite Phil’s noise of protest. “Eh, you did hit pretty hard, probably woulda knocked the wind outta me too.”

Tommy nodded slowly. “Do you want to go again?” he wasn’t sure what Technoblade would want now. Another fight was the most likely option- he could still remember the hours they spent in the freezing arctic air, where Technoblade would fight him with seemingly endless energy, until Tommy physically couldn’t go any longer or until he mastered whatever move Techno had picked out that day.

However, Technoblade shook his head and allowed his stone sword to fall back into the inventory. “Nah, I don’t really want to. Why don’t we take a walk instead kid? I need you to show me where the mine is- I can’t remember. .”

About fifteen different warning bells went off in Tommy’s head because that was suspicious as fuck. Technoblade obviously knew where the mines were, and Techno even winced a little, like even he knew it was a bad fucking lie. He looked over at Phil, who looked almost as confused as Tommy felt. He wasn’t sure if that was comforting or not. Either way, it just sounded like a really good way to get stabbed or some shit. But, then again, this Technoblade hadn’t been betrayed. Even if he found Tommy annoying he wouldn’t kill him- he was pretty sure that Technoblade wouldn’t anyway. He hadn’t killed him when he found Tommy hiding in his basement after all. Technoblade had liked him once.

And, if Tommy wanted to keep Technoblade from hating him- maybe even getting Technoblade to like him this time around- he’d have to suck it up and spend time around him. Tommy could do that. “Already forgetting where shit is? I guess I can show you.” Tommy grumbled as he pulled his coat back on, ignoring the way his arms were already protesting. Stupid weak body.

“Tommy you’ll need to go grab some armour” Phil chimed in, sounding a little concerned “Things tend to spawn in there, no matter how much light we spit down there. I think your

iron armour is in a chest in storage.”

“Iron armour?” Technoblade chimed in, sounding incredulous “Oh no, I don’t travel with broke people. Hold on. I think I have an extra set of diamond armour in my ender chest.”

Tommy couldn’t really find himself surprised as Technoblade placed his enderchest, rustling around, only to pull out a diamond chest plate, leggings, boots, and a Netherite helmet. Phil, on the other hand, gaped a little “You have a full set of diamond and a Netherite set of armour?”

“Oh yeah,” Technoblade said casually, as he passed the armour to Tommy. It was enchanted to be light, Tommy could tell because his arms didn’t buckle under the weight. That was even better than his iron, which was not only ineffective but heavy. “I had some extra time, ya know? Just did some extra grindin’”

Phil shook his head. “Alright, just try to be back before lunch, you two,”

Tommy walked almost in step with Technoblade- he was still slightly too short to fall exactly in step, but he could mostly keep up. Techno had put on a set of Netherite himself and his long cloak. He wasn’t even pretending to actually be leading Technoblade towards the mines because the older man seemed to know exactly where he was going.

That somehow made things worse. Not to mention fucking silence. The forest was still, and covered in snow. Even the birds seemed to be quiet, despite bright sunlight filtering in between the tall trees. Fuck the silence.

“So, why do you need to go to the mines?” Tommy asked, “It seems you’ve already got plenty of fucking resources.”

“Well,” Technoblade said, “You can never have too much, ya know?”

“I guess,” Tommy said, remembering the vault full of Wither skulls future Technoblade had. “You would have that fucking mindset.”

Technoblade sighed, coming to a stop. Tommy stopped too, trying not to imagine the last time he and Technoblade had taken any sort of walk together. “Tommy, I don’t really need you to lead me to the mines.”

“No shit.” Tommy muttered, staring at the ground by Techno’s feet. “That was a weak lie. So why’d you drag me so far out from the house, when it’s cold and shit? Going to kill me or something?”

It was supposed to be a joke, but Tommy couldn’t help but grimace at his admittedly scared tone at the end. He clenched his jaw and kept his eyes on Technoblade’s boots. He couldn’t look him in the eye. He couldn’t.

“If I wanted to kill you, I wouldn’t have given you my diamond armour, would I?” Technoblade asked. “I mean, not that it would stop me from killing you, but I did work hard for that armour. wOuldn’t want to dent it for no reason.”

Technoblade’s voice was dry and Tommy was certain he was joking, but he couldn’t help the slight flinch at the idea of his armour’s value being the only thing that stood between him and Technoblade’s sword. Armour didn’t stay on forever. He could practically feel the heat from the TNT, blowing up whatever meager armour he’d scraped together on his face, and hear the sound of Dream’s laugh whenever he protested. He swallowed hard.

“Tommy, Tommy I was kidding.” Technoblade’s voice managed to snap him back into some sort of reality “Hey, look at me. I-I was just kiddin’. I just wanna talk to you.”

“Yeah, course.” Tommy managed, finally forcing his eyes to Technoblade’s face only to find pity. Tommy didn’t want his fucking pity. He didn’t deserve it. “I knew that, bitch. Besides, I was, uh holding back when we sparred. I didn’t want to hurt you with my moves.”

“If you say so. “Technoblade said with a snort “But, I will say, you fought real good, especially since you’ve been in a coma and all that. Where’d you learn that disarming move? It didn’t work of course, but It definitely could, if you had more power behind it. It wasn’t Phil’s style”

Tommy swallowed a nervous laugh. Technoblade had taught him that move- probably created it himself or learned it on some far-off server, but obviously he hadn’t learned it yet. Shit. “Oh, just around.” Tommy said “I’m fucking smart, just kinda made it up. Hadn’t gotten a chance to try it on Phil yet.”

Technoblade snorted “Well, it wouldn’t have worked the way you did it- needs more twist and power- but still a good idea. May have to test it out myself. And speakin’ of Phil, when did you start calling him that, instead of dad?”

Tommy paled. He hadn’t stopped calling Phil dad until Phil had left him and Wilbur in late spring of the next year. Right now he had no reason to have stopped, especially since Wilbur was still calling him dad. Shit. He’d fucked another thing up already. This was just fantastic. “Oh, I just, uh, I’m a big man! As a big man yourself, you should get it! I’m far too big of a man to call Phil dad!”

Technoblade stared at him, something like worry in his black eyes. “Tommy, that’s now why I stopped- wait, this isn’t what I really wanted to talk about. Phil isn’t happy, but he isn’t gonna say anything about it, specifically. He’s more worried about whatever is happenin’ in your head.”

“Why is Phil worried about my head! It’s fine” Tommy snapped because the last thing he wanted to do was talk about his feelings with Technoblade. “What, do you want me to talk about my feelings or some pussy shit like that?”

“You don’t have to talk about your feelin’s necessarily, but you can at least listen, alright?” Teechnoblade said as he dropped down on a snow-covered log. He patted the space on the other side “Now sit down.”

Tommy wanted to argue, but he wasn’t sure it would do any good, and his legs were already aching from the sparring, so he dropped down beside Technoblade, still glaring at the floor.

“He thinks you’re goin’ crazy you know,” Technoblade said after a moment of silence. Tommy’s head snapped up because he wasn’t fucking expected that to come out of Technoblade’s mouth. “Seeing shit, hallucinating, screamin’ in the middle of the night. He’s worried about you. Wilbur too. Heck, even I can tell something’s going on upstairs that ain’t right”

Tommy closed his eyes. They’d all already figured something out. He’d thought he was doing okay- he thought that maybe, just maybe, he would fuck everything up for once. Obviously, he was fucking wrong. It was just like everyone said. He only caused problems.

“-my. Tommy!” Tommy’s eyes snapped open as Technoblade’s hand landed on his shoulder and he realized that he was crying. He wiped angrily at his eyes, “Tommy that’s like the third time you’ve zoned out today, which doesn’t really help your- are you crying?”

“No,” Tommy snapped, which was obviously a lie. He wasn’t sure why he bothered. “I’m not crying. It’s just cold and my eyes are watering from the stupid cold.”

“That... doesn’t make sense, but okay.” Technoblade said, “But if you’re cold, here, have this.”

Before Tommy realized what he was doing, something heavy and warm draped over his shoulders. It was Technoblade’s cloak. He let out a choked half-laugh, thinking about the blue cloak Techno had gifted him in the future, the one that had sunk under the community house when Tommy chose his side. “The point is, Tommy, you’ve definitely been going through somethin’. That’s the whole reason Phil sent me a message- he thinks you’re gonna turn out like me or somethin’”

“What do you mean?” Tommy asked, still wiping the tears from his face. “Like you? He thinks I’ll turn into a half pig hybrid or some shit?”

“No,” Technoblade said, then paused “Well, he has considered you aren’t human, but I’m pretty sure you are. Nah, he thinks you’re hearing voices like do Which, is, uh, the, uh, yeah, I’ve been hearing voices in my head since I was a kid.”

“Wait, you actually hear voices?” Tommy said before he could stop himself “I thought you and Phil were just fucking with me about the Chat since I broke-!” Tommy cut himself off but it was too late. It was too late.

Tommy found himself staring up at Technoblade in horror because he hadn’t meant to say that, he hadn’t meant to let something about the future slip, but in a moment of weakness (weak, he was so weak, always so weak, behind his stupid bravado) he’d fucking let it slip. Technoblade’s face was neutral. Too neutral.

“Tommy,” Technoblade said, in a carefully neutral voice that reminded Tommy far too much of that day in the ruins of the community house. Despite the heavy cloak, he still felt cold chills run down his back. “How did you know about the Chat?”

Chapter End Notes

My computer is on 13% I must type fast. I hope you all enjoy this! The next chapter is like half-written and was originally part of this one, I just liked the ending here. Hopefully that means that the next one soon since I know what's happening.

Let me know what you think! The next chapter will clear up why Tommy shouldn't know about chat, and in the next like 2 or so sort how he time traveled.

Also more Wilbur angst soon.

not where I belong

Chapter Summary

Tommy and Techno finish their chat. Tommy ponders the past.

Chapter Notes

I changed the last lines of dialogue in the last chapter, so if you read them in the first like 24 hours they were posted, go reread it, because I messed something up. It is a small change but it kinda cleared some stuff up.

TW for a vague description of a panic attack, but it's super vague.

Anyway, enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Technoblade was trying not to jump to conclusions, mostly because he had no reasonable conclusions to jump to.

Tommy had entered their life after the worst of Technoblade's voices had come in, and even then, he was far too young to be told about it. Phil had told Technoblade and Wilbur that they weren't to tell Tommy under any circumstance. Mostly, because Tommy couldn't keep his mouth shut, which seemed to still be an issue.

Technoblade no longer really cared if people thought he was crazy- He probably *was* crazy- but he was almost certain that they hadn't told Tommy. Except, somehow, Tommy knew about it. That was... concerning, especially since Tommy said that he thought Phil and him were just fucking with him. That implied that Technoblade had told him- or at least mentioned it, but he hadn't. It was. Chat definitely thought it was concerning.

Mindreader?

Can he hear us?

Scream if you can hear us, Tommy!

Blood!

He can't hear us, dipshits, Phil probably told him.

Technobro!

Phil didn't tell him! He shouldn't know!

Siblingblade!

Weird that he knew this, and had some random fighting skills he can't explain, right?

Brother bonding Pog!

Good point, what if he isn't really Tommy?

AngstInnit!

Blood!

That's definitely Tommy. He's too annoying to be anyone else.

What if-

Technoblade gritted his teeth as he forcefully pulled his attention away from Chat, which was going nuts. None of their theories were helpful- they rarely were in situations like this. especially when they started screaming about conspiracy theories.

Tommy cracked a nervous grin. He'd been staring at Technoblade with poorly concealed horror but was now looking anywhere but Technoblade's face, as he just straight up lied "Well, uh Wilbur told me! He- uh- he was mad at you or something and told me-"

"That doesn't even make sense!" Technoblade interrupted, frowning as Tommy flinched. The kid was on the verge of panic. Again. Ender, this kid was nothing but all ball of nerves anymore.. Technoblade was *not* qualified for this job. "Wilbur wouldn't have cared enough to tell you first of all-"

"But he did!" Tommy exclaimed, and there was more than a hint of desperation in his tone "He, uh, told me you heard fucking voices and that I was a Big Man so I had a right- "

“Tommy, *you said* that you thought Phil and I were messing with you. I know for a fact I’ve never told you about Chat and I’m almost certain Phil hasn’t either. So, how did you know?” Technoblade tried to keep his voice even, but he could help the impatience in his voice. Tommy was lyin’ to him and not even lying well! But, Tommy was tense and Technoblade wasn’t certain the kid wasn’t going to bolt, so he tried to pull back his tone. He tried, okay. “Tommy, you’re a terrible liar. Just tell me the truth. I’m not angry- I won’t be angry, unless you keep lyin’ to me.”

Tommy shook his head, still refusing to look at Technoblade. “ “I-I can't tell you. I- really can't tell you, damn it.”

“You can’t tell me,” Technoblade repeated, trying to sound gentle. He was pretty sure it wasn’t working super well, based on Tommy’s expression “And why not?”

“You-you won’t believe me.” Tommy’s voice cracked and the kid started crying *again* . Technoblade had no idea what to do with that, especially not as Tommy continued, sounding pretty much full panicked now. The tiny bit of bravado he’d been holding onto was long gone, not more Big Man, or any other of his usual gimmicks. Technoblade wasn’t sure he’d ever seen Tommy so worked up- as a kid, Phil and Wilbur had always taken care of Tommy’s meltdowns, few and far between as they were. Even then, Techno was pretty sure he’d never seen Tommy this torn up. It pained him. Tommy was annoying, but a good kid. He didn’t deserve... whatever this was. . “It's- you wouldn’t fucking believe me. And if you did, bad things would happen. Terrible things. I-I can’t let them happen. Not again. I’ve already fucked this up..”

Technoblade’s brow raised in surprise as Tommy buried his face in his hands, seemingly talking to himself more than Technoblade. He still had no idea how Tommy could know about the Chat. What did that even *mean* ? Like really, what the heck could that mean? And what did he say to that? Technoblade studied him a moment and suppressed a sigh. He had no idea what he was doing. Why did people seem to think *he* was the one for this job?

“Tommy,” Techno said, “Tommy look at me.”

The kid didn’t move- Technoblade could see his shoulders shaking, and it wasn’t from the cold- “I can’t.” Tommy mumbled “I’m too fucking stupid. I-I can’t. I can’t believe I’ve already-”

Technoblade felt helpless as he watched Tommy seemingly spiral, brother breathing rapid and shallow. He hated that. He was Technoblade, he shouldn't be sitting in the woods, watching ~~his kid brother~~ Tommy have some sort of panic attack, because his hands were built for weapons and for fighting. His brain worked in attack strategies not... emotions. Phil or Wilbur, heck even Tubbo was probably better suited for this than him, and he was a kid! Phil had only sent Technoblade because he thought Tommy was losing his mind (which seemed to be an increasingly valid assessment) which still didn't make sense because it wasn't like Technoblade had ever gotten rid of the voices.

But, that's where he was. A little bit cold, more concerned about Tommy than he wanted to be, and a little stressed because the chat wouldn't stop screaming at him for various reasons. And, he couldn't just let Tommy have a complete breakdown, more so than he already was. Techno wasn't sure if Tommy was crying anymore, since he'd stopped mumbling, but he could see that the kid was still trembling and his breathing was way too fast. He awkwardly laid a hand on Tommy's shoulder and Tommy didn't even react, which Technoblade took as a bad sign, since Tommy had pretty much avoided all physical touch possible, with the exception of Tubbo(and apparently one hug with Wilbur,).

"Tommy, breath with me, alright?" Technoblade said quietly. Phil had taught him how to do this when he was a kid. Used it on him a few times, when the voices got real bad. Some nights, Technoblade had to do this himself, when the voices got too loud and too much.

"In for one, two, three, four." Techno coached, as Tommy drew in a shuddering breath, "Now hold it. Good, now, uh, let it out, real slow."

Tommy couldn't quite match the pace at first, as Technoblade counted the breaths out for him, but slowly Tommy's breathing evened and deepened, to match Technoblade's quiet counting. After a few minutes, Tommy finally lifted his head.

"Sorry." He croaked "I-I didn't mean to do all that. I'm fine, though. Really. You-You, don't need to worry about it, Technoblade. I'm a big man, not a pussy who can't-"

"Shut up for a minute, Tommy" Technoblade said. Tommy fixed Technoblade with a glare, but snapped his mouth shut, crossing his arms. Technoblade felt a little guilty at the harshness of his tone, but he really needed Tommy to listen. Tommy was falling apart, and if nothing

else, Phil had trusted him to help Tommy as he'd helped Technoblade years ago. Techno couldn't let him down. And, *maybe*, Tommy was still important to him.

"Look, I'm not gonna pretend I know what's going on in your head because I'm pretty sure it's not that same what's happenin' in mine. But, I do know something's wrong kid. I mean, you were just cryin' and had a panic attack for Pete's sake. " Tommy's glare hardened and Technoblade grimaced "Just listen. I have no idea how you know about Chat, and if you don't tell me, I'm just gonna assume that it's hallucinations. But whatever it is, I'll believe you kid, even if it sounds crazy. I'm probably the best you got, in that department"

"Its-It's not in my fucking head, you bitch,' Tommy snarled, suddenly back to angry, instead of afraid. "I- I don't. It's not-"

Technoblade was trying to be patient. He *really* was. But damn, if the kid didn't make it hard. "I get it, they probably feel real, But they aren't Tommy. So, please, just tell me what's goin' on before you hurt yourself or someone else."

Technoblade watched as emotions played across Tommy's face, and he was almost sure that Tommy wasn't going to give him anything. The kid just looked so angry and his eyes just looked haunted, even more so than they had all week, and even though the kid was a teenager, he looked so small in Technoblade's cloak. It reminded Technoblade of those first few weeks Tommy had lived with them, half-wild and terrified of letting anyone but Wilbur near him for long periods of time, hoarding food and whatever else he could get his hands on, terrified every time anyone got close to his stuff. This Tommy was worse than that now- there wasn't just fear or panic, but anger. Bitterness. The kid was being haunted by something, and Technoblade had no idea what.

"If I tell you, you have to swear- swear on your life, all your lives-" Tommy said finally, "That you won't tell anyone. Not Phil, not Wilbur, not, not Tubbo. Not one fucking soul"

"If you tell me the truth, I swear it," Technoblade promised, before he even really thought about it. Phil wouldn't be happy with that, but Tommy needed help. He'd make that promise, and if it got the kid talking, he'd keep it.

Tommy nodded and squared his shoulders. Technoblade watched with morbid fascination as Tommy somehow managed to shutter his face, expression going blank. It made

Technoblade's gut twist. That was the look of a soldier, not the kid Tommy should be.

"I'm from the future. Somehow, I fucking time traveled"

Technoblade blinked once. Then again. There was no way he heard that correctly. Tommy had said he was from the future. That he time traveled.

Time Travel!

Time Travel!

Time Travel Pog!

Future Tommy?

AngstInnit!

I knew it!

Pog!

Time Travel?

He's lying!

Time Travel!

No, looked- he's freaked out. He's telling the truth.

Time Travel!

Time Travel?

Time Travel Pog!

Okay, so he *did* hear that correctly, based on what Chat was screaming, very unhelpfully, in his mind.

“The future?” Technoblade repeated, trying very, very hard not to sound as skeptical as he felt because while he’d seen some really weird shit, time travel was still just a little far out there for him. Especially Tommy, human Tommy, who was still just a *kid* .

“About two years in the future, to be exact,” Tommy said. His tone was clipped and rushed “I really didn’t aim to tell anyone this, especially not you, so that’s fucking ironic. You’d probably laugh because it’s really funny except you have no idea why. But, yeah I wasn’t going to say anything but I’ve already fucked it up, so figured I might as well finish the job. Just like usual, can’t quite manage to do anything right, except what’s fucking wrong-”

“Woah, hold on Tommy.” Technoblade said, bringing a hand to his forehead, as if that would stave off the massive headache building, “I’m going to need you to slow down for me. I’m still trying to process the fact that you think you time traveled.” Because time travel wasn’t real. It simply didn’t exist, which meant that Tommy’s problems were deeper than they realized. Was the kid just fully delusional? That wouldn’t explain the Chat, though, because Tommy was definitely lying about Wilbur telling him, and he literally had no way of knowing. His head throbbed already.

“Hey!” Tommy exclaimed, jumping up. The anger, at least, was more like the Tommy he was used to though “I don’t think I fucking time traveled. I know I did! I’m not crazy, you bitch, I-I know that I’m in the past. You said you would believe me!”

Technoblade winced, both because Tommy was now shouting, which was not a great addition to the screaming in his own head and because that was technically true. “Well, that was before you tried to spring time travel on me, Tommy. I’m sorry if I’m having just a little trouble believing you that you somehow managed to come back in time at what, 16?”

Tommy just glared at him, shaking his head “I knew it. I can’t believe I thought- I knew I should’ve kept my mouth shut. Or lied. Fuck you.”

Tommy was shaking- Technoblade could *see* Tommy shaking and it was a mix of rage and fear on the kid’s face that finally made Technoblade cave. “Wait, no, Tommy, look. It- listen, you gotta understand how this sounds. I come back, you’ve just gotten out of a coma, where apparently you were out of your mind, you’ve been acting weird, and now you claim that you’re from the future? I just-”

And now that he thought about it, it kinda made sense, how Tommy was better at fighting than he should be, the haunted look in the kid's eye, and the weird line about Chat. But, if that was true, then what the hell happened to shake Tommy up so badly? The kid had been terrified and seemed one wrong look away from panic. What future did he see, or think that he was in, that would make him so shaken. So bitter. Techno didn't like what that implied.

"I believe you." Technoblade said, cutting off Tommy's rant about... well...he honestly hadn't been listening to Tommy, since he was trying to wrap his mind around the idea of time travel being real "I've considered it, and while I have no clue how you managed it, I believe you."

Or, at least he *mostly* believed it. Technoblade was a man of logic. Ration. Someone just... time traveling didn't make sense to him. But, he at least believed that Tommy truly thought he'd been in the future, though telling the kid that probably wouldn't help anything.

"You believe me?" Tommy said, almost skeptically, even as Technoblade *watched* the tension fall from his shoulders. "I thought it would take more fucking convincing than that."

"Tommy, you're a horrible liar." Technoblade said bluntly "And there is also literally no reason for you to make this up. Like, what would you gain? It would also explain the weird things I've noticed you doing."

"You noticed?" Tommy asked, frowning. "I guess I'm not fucking surprised. But I thought I was doing pretty damn well hiding it."

"Everyone knows something is up." Technoblade deadpanned."Like, I'm pretty sure everyone knows something is up." Did the kids really think he was fooling anyone? Yikes.

"Fuck" Tommy said, finally dropping back onto the log beside Technoblade. Good. he'd been half worried Tommy was going to bolt. Tommy's hands were still shaking as he ran one through his hair "But you really aren't going to tell Phil or anyone about this? At all?"

Technoblade suppressed a grimace. Phil, if he ever found out (which he probably would, since Tommy was a horrible liar), was going to be pissed. He would probably want to know that his youngest son was honest to Ender time traveler. But, Technoblade had promised Tommy. Techno was nothing, if not a man of his word. "I promised you I wouldn't Tommy,"

Technoblade said. “I still think that you should probably tell them- they will probably be more helpful than-”

“No.” Tommy snapped, then took a breath. “I don’t want to tell anyone else. Not even Tubbo”

“Why not?” Technoblade asked, “They’re way better suited to the whole, helping you work through your issues thing than me.”

Tommy gave him a glare, but this one was more along the lines of one of Tommy’s normal glares- just annoyed. “First of all, I don’t have *issues*. *I’m* totally fine! I just had a few nightmares! Time travel just fucked up my brain a little. But it’s all good now! And, the reason I can’t tell anyone, well. It... it might, uh, mess up the future. Timelines and shit. I’ve already messed it up enough, by making you come home.”

That definitely wasn’t the truth, or at least not all of it. Man, he needed to teach the kid how to lie better, because honestly? Unacceptable. Normally, he’d call the bullshit and force answers. Part of him wanted to, because really? Time travel? But, Tommy looked exhausted, and the sun was steadily climbing in the sky. It would be noon soon, and Phil wanted them back. If Phil came out here while Tommy was shouting about time travel that would probably make everything worse. Even if it would mean that Technoblade got to leave earlier... no! He couldn’t do that.

The kid had given Technoblade an answer. A crazy, crazy answer that honestly made no sense, and gave him more questions than answers, but he had given Technoblade the bare minimum, which is all he’d really asked for. Whether the kid really was from the future or was experiencing some sort of weird hallucination, he needed help. And unfortunately, it appeared that Technoblade was the one who would be giving it to him.

He could break his promise to Tommy, but at the idea, half his chat was shouting, and honestly? If he broke that trust... based on what Phil told him and what he’d seen with his own two eyes, he had no idea what Tommy would do.

So, he bit back the million burning questions he had and nodded. “Alright. Tommy, I won’t tell them, and I’ll do my best to try and keep them from finding out. But, I’m gonna need more from you, since I’ll be lyin’ to everyone, including Phil.”

Tommy's face was instantly wary. "What do you want from me."

"Answers." Technobalde said, honestly "Listen, if I'm going to help you, I need to know what I'm working with. I have a bunch of questions"

Tommy shook his head. "No, no. Technoblade, I- there are things I can't tell you. They're, uh, too dangerous to the timeline! Yeah! I can't fuck it up too much. I can't answer, well much of anything. Unfortunately. You know how it is. "

"I really don't know," Technoblade said dryly. "I've never time traveled. But, listen. You don't have to answer all my questions right now since we need to get back to the house. I won't even make you tell me tonight. Tomorrow though, we're taking another walk. You're going to show me that disarming move, then we're going to have a long talk about this, okay kid?"

Tommy looked like he wanted to argue but eventually just nodded, getting to his feet. "Fine. We'll discuss this tomorrow, or whatever. Better not fucking tell anyone that I cried out here either."

Techno laughed, but it was mostly forced. He had far too many questions without answers, a teenager who was either totally crazy or from the future, and a promise that basically meant he was stuck on this server until he helped that annoying kid work through his issues. Great. What could go wrong? (Chat, that was a rhetorical question, Chat please). Tommy needed him though, especially if he was going to try and hide this from Phil (which, in Techno's opinion was a dumb move), and Techno couldn't bring himself to break his promise, even if he easily could. Even if Tommy wasn't *really* his brother.

"Now, Tommy I didn't make any promises about that." he teased, trying to make the mood lighter than it was. Tommy's glower meant that it sort of worked "Let's go get lunch before we give Phil any grey feathers"

Tommy was laying in his bed, staring at the ceiling.

He'd spent part of the afternoon with Wilbur, who was writing a new song. He'd normally never, ever be caught dead doing that, because it was boring. But, the only song Wilbur had sung in Pogtopia was that stupid national anthem, and Ghostbur didn't really sing much, and as much as he didn't want to admit it, he missed Wilbur's singing.

It made him sound like a pussy, but it was true. And since he'd already cried on Techno of all fucking, and probably sentenced himself to death via astronomical fuck up, he figured he may as well enjoy it while he could. Tommy had climbed into the attic space Wilbur liked to write songs in after he'd heard the notes drifting down, and Wilbur had allowed him to stay. He'd worked on crafting a few random things, using iron nuggets and string, just for fun, but mostly he'd just listened to Wilbur play.

Eventually, he couldn't stand the small space so he'd crawled out of the attic, claiming he was tired, grabbed some bread for dinner, and had retreated to his room, thankfully avoiding both Phil and Technoblade.

Tommy was... Honestly, he didn't really feel anything. He'd used up pretty much every drop of emotion he had left (and honestly, Tommy hadn't even realized he had so much emotion left at all) during his absolute meltdown in the woods.

Ironically, the last big panic attack he'd had Technoblade had also been the one to talk him down from it. It hadn't been long after he'd left exile and he couldn't even quite remember what caused it. Techno had gotten him to calm down though. Since his exile was over, and doomsday, and nearly dying, and Tubbo nearly dying, and putting Dream in prison he hadn't let himself have enough time to ponder it all, let alone have a panic attack.

He blamed time travel completely for his emotional instability because Tommy wasn't normally such a pussy. However, he was being a bit of a little bitch, and was considering his fate.

He had ruined everything already, so why did it matter? Technoblade wasn't supposed to be here, so he had no fucking idea what that would do to the timeline and now Technoblade knew about him being from the future. Tommy had been worried Techno was going to force

the answers from him then and there- he'd already been trying to come up with some lies that might not fall apart instantly, but Techno had backed off.

At least for a while. He'd have questions that Tommy had to answer. And while the threat wasn't explicit, he would tell Phil and Wilbur, which was just a bad idea. Even though he was most worried about Technoblade killing him outright, if he ever found out about how Tommy betrayed him or killing Wilbur for the Pogtopia war mess, the other two finding out...

Wilbur was too likely to run straight to the Dream SMP if Tommy told him. Wilbur would love nothing more than to be a revolutionary and if he thought that somehow, he could use Tommy's information to win a fucking war, he'd probably do it. And Phil... Phil would not only hate him for betraying Technoblade, but would probably hate him for letting Wilbur get so bad, and for everything else he'd done. Tommy wasn't even sure what had been right and what had been wrong.

Tommy had to keep Technoblade on his side.

Besides, it might, if the stars aligned just right, work out in his favor.

Technoblade leaving had caused the issues to begin with. If Technoblade stayed, Phil might stay longer. He wouldn't have the big fight with Wilbur, which ultimately led to both Phil and Wilbur leaving, and Tubbo and Tommy shortly after that. If Techno stayed, then Phil wouldn't be able to go off with him like last time.

Maybe... maybe this could work. As long as Tommy didn't tell Technoblade about certain things, then he'd be fine, right? And as long as he was careful about what exactly it could be fine. Yeah, cause careful had worked real fucking well today. He couldn't quite muster up the energy to feel anything but angry at himself. He'd been so stupid, just blurting that out.

But, he'd made his bed, as they said. And Tommy had nowhere to go. Nothing to do but try and fix this stupid mess that he'd made, and prevent the ones he'd made in the future. If that was even possible. All he seemed to do was make messes.

Even as a kid, he'd only made messes. He was certain that none of those things would have happened in the future if Wilbur hadn't bothered with him on the street those years ago.

--

Tommy was glad it was summer. Summer was much better than winter since it wasn't cold. He could always find way more food, and it took way longer for mobs to spawn since daylight lasted so much longer.

It was also easier to hide since he didn't have to try and keep warm.

Summer also meant more people out and about, which meant he could steal from them easier. Villagers were really easy to steal from, but the Iron Golem was getting suspicious of him, so he'd been hungry the last few days, unable to go in any houses. He had stolen from the garden, but raw potatoes weren't very good and made his stomach hurt.

He needed other humans.

He'd been kicked out of the caravan he as with, for stealing food, and he'd been stranded in the stupid village for a month. He was pretty sure the caravan wasn't coming back. In that whole time, he hadn't seen another human. Only villagers.

He wasn't really old enough to work and didn't speak fluent villager, so he was starting to get worried. What if the caravan didn't come back? Tommy was 5 but wasn't stupid. He couldn't survive like this forever.

Then, he saw a human.

Not only a person but a kid like him. He was older, and way taller than Tommy, but still a kid, without any adults. He could probably steal from him after he got his trades. Tommy could probably follow him home and scare him. That's what older caravan kids did. They scare people into giving them stuff. So he could probably do it, even if he was still kinda small.

Probably.

So, he waited until the boy was done trading, watching warily from behind a post, then, went to follow the boy. Except, the boy was headed right for him. Tommy froze, eyes wide, as the boy approached. He was tall and lanky, and kinda intimidating. Tommy debated running, but the older boy looked fast and he was too scared to move.

“Hello there!” the boy sought brightly “I noticed you watching me. I didn’t know any other kids lived near the village. Did your parents just move here?”

“I-” Tommy’s voice stuck “No! I don’t have parents. I live here now, though.”

The boy frowned, though Tommy wasn’t sure why. Most people didn’t have parents, right? “You’re a bit young to be living on your own, aren’t you?”

“I’m 5!” Tommy said, crossing his arms grumpily “I’m a big man!”

“Ah, I’m sure you are.” he said “My name’s Wilbur. Are you hungry?”

Tommy wanted to say no- admitting you were hungry and asking for food only made other people angry because it was selfish- but his stomach growled loudly at that exact moment and he flushed dark red as Wilbur laughed. “Sounds like it. Do you want to come with me? I don’t live far from here and I can fix you some lunch!”

Tommy hesitated. Wilbur seemed nice, but that didn’t always mean he was nice. The caravan people had sometimes been nice, but then, if he asked for too much, they weren’t. And he always had to do something, in order to get his food. “What do you want?” he asked, as he glared up at the boy.

“What do you mean?” Wilbur asked, looking confused.

“Well, you obviously aren’t going to feed me for free, dumbass,” Tommy said, using one of the grownup words he knew. “What do I have to do to earn my food?”

Wilbur made an expression that Tommy couldn’t place. He looked sad or surprised or something. Weirdo. Finally, the older boy said “Nothing? I’m just offering you food. You don’t have to earn it.”

Tommy scoffed “Yeah right. I know that stupid trick. I don’t wanna owe you one. I want to pay before I eat.”

Wilbur frowned. “Well, uh, alright. You can um, pick blue flowers! My inventory is nearly full after trading, and I need blue flowers to make some blue dye. There are a bunch on the way to my house.”

Flowers. That was girly shit, but if Tommy was getting a meal for the price of a few blue flowers, he’d gladly take the trade, even if it was weird. Better than mending shit. “Okay.” he finally agreed. “Let’s go.”

Tommy had picked the flowers, and Wilbur had accepted blue dye as a trade for pretty much everything the first few days Tommy stayed in the house. Finally, Wilbur convinced him it wasn’t necessary, and that he didn’t have to trade with him to get food, or clothes, or a bed. It was then, Tommy decided he wasn’t going to run away. Of course, by that point, Wilbur probably wouldn’t have let him leave even if Tommy wanted to. When Phil got back, he’d been so scared he was going to be sent back, but he hadn’t been. Once Phil had officially taken him in, Wilbur had given him his first gift- his first real possession. Tommy had kept the blue blanket Wilbur made for him from that blue dye until he left the server with Tubbo.

It was folded in the chair beside his bed, faded and a little worn, but there. Tommy didn’t realize there was a lump in his throat until he felt the tears well in his eyes. Ender, he was such a pussy, crying over a stupid blanket.

But, if he covered his bed with the blanket, even if it was already too warm in his room, Tommy would never admit it.

Chapter End Notes

I kinda hate this chapter, but I feel like it is finally presentable. I have rewritten it like 3 times and I just don't feel like its going to meet ya'lls expectations. rip. Anyway, I also do not know how to write children don't come for me.

uhh, you guys are not ready for the next few chapters because I have plans, and some is already written. I actually made myself cry writing one part so rip to you guys.

Yeah if you hated this one as much as I did please don't tell me I will cry. I think I spent too much time in the cold this week and it froze my writer brain.

Last thing: ranboo s stream today made me cry, and I'm very happy for him. He deserves all that and more!

and it's and old scar

Chapter Summary

Phil needs a nap, Tommy remebers the future

Chapter Notes

There will be another chapter this week since it is 90% written (and was originally part of this chapter) and hopefully a third this weekend. This one isn't particularly angsty, or fluffy, mostly just some plot. I actually have a plot now too, and am roughly estimating 20 -25 chapters total? Don't hold me to it though.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Philza was tired. He'd dragged himself out of bed with the dawn, but he was exhausted. He'd not managed to sleep much the night before- hadn't in weeks, and it was weighing on him. He was sitting at the kitchen table, just thinking. He'd aimed to make a to-do list, but he just had a blank sheet of paper in front of him, taunting him, as he simply wished to go back to sleep. But, he didn't really have time for that.

Tommy was more himself every day, it seemed, but somehow, he was also less himself. Sure he was loud again, hanging out with Tubbo and arguing with practically anyone, but he was still nervous. Phil could see the way he sat, tense like he was ready to run at any time. He seemed to cling to Tubbo more than he did sometimes, and Phil caught him looking almost... sad, at random times. He still avoided Phil and until the day before, Technoblade.

And Wilbur seemed extra moody, hiding up the attic constantly, unless he was doing his chores, eating, or spending time with Tubbo and Tommy, which wasn't much, though sometimes Wil just liked his space, though, so he wasn't too concerned. Especially not when Tommy was still... Not well. At least Technoblade seemed himself, though that wasn't always comforting, considering. Almost as if summoned by Phil's thoughts, he heard the telltale sign of someone coming down the stairs, footsteps too heavy to be Wilbur, but too light for Tommy.

“Morning Techno,” Phil said, as his eldest came into the kitchen. Even if Technoblade denied it, Technoblade was his eldest son. “Sleep well?”

Technoblade looked, for the most part, like he was ready to go. His long pink hair was tied at the base on his neck, and he was already dressed in everything but his cloak, mask, and helmet- Phil could see the glinting Netherite under his clothes. Phil wasn't surprised, considering he'd heard Techno moving around for the last half-hour or so, but it was still strange, to see his son wearing armour in his own house. Phil had a feeling he wouldn't like the reason why Techno wore it constantly, so he didn't ask.

“Good enough,” Technoblade said amicably, which wasn't really the answer that Phil was looking for. But, Phil didn't press, since he supposed he had no room to argue.

“Good. How was your walk with Tommy yesterday? You all were a bit late for lunch, and both of you seemed to vanish after that.” Tommy had been oddly quiet during lunch, shoveling his food down in record time, then promptly vanishing. Techno hadn't had much to say either. Phil could tell he was distracted and kept casting poorly discussed looks of concern in the direction Tommy had vanished. But, before Phil could ask, Techno was back out the door. He hadn't been back when Phil finally fell asleep, but Phil had noticed the smelter going when he woke up, processing a new stack of iron ore.

Technoblade shrugged “Eh, it was fine. Didn't try to run from me, so that was a plus. Did cry on me a little, which I didn't appreciate.”

Phil frowned “What happened? Did he say something about what's going on?”

Technoblade shifted uncomfortably in his seat. “Ah, well, sorta?”

Phil slumped with relief. Progress. They were finally making progress on whatever was going on with Tommy. “That's great! I dunno how you managed to get it out of his, but I'm glad you did. What did he say then?”

Technoblade cringed slightly, and Phil's relief dampened. It couldn't have been too bad, or Technoblade would've already told him since, while Techno was good at many things, but he

wasn't always good at emotions. "Well, uh, I can't tell you."

"You can't tell me?" Phil repeated. He had been expecting Techno to say Tommy had refused to say anything really important, but even just Tommy admitting there was a problem, well, that could be considered progress. But Technoblade not being able to tell him? "What the fuck do you mean by that?"

Technoblade shrugged "Well, the kid made me promise that I wouldn't tell anyone what he said. Specifically you. And I promised him I wouldn't."

"Are you fucking serious?" Phil asked, even though it was obvious Technoblade was. He took a deep breath, trying not to shout. He trusted his eldest, but he'd hardly slept in the last two weeks, and this was the last thing he needed.

"Listen, Phil, I promised- Good morning Tommy!" Technoblade said, cutting himself off. Phil turned around to see Tommy eyeing them warily at the edge of the kitchen. "Ready to go?"

Phil turned back to Technoblade, who was already back on his feet, pulling his cloak around his shoulders. He shot him a look, and Technoblade pursed his lips. Message received, at least. That conversation wasn't over and Technoblade knew it. They'd have to come back eventually and Phil, while patient, would be getting his answers. "Where are you two going?" he asked, as Tommy headed for the door.

"Tommy's goin' to show me that disarming move he tried on me yesterday." Technoblade said, "Then I have a few things to show him. Kid's could be quite a fighter, based on what I saw yesterday." And Phil had noticed yesterday, that Tommy held his own against Technoblade far better than he expected. Tommy was good at sparring. He wasn't quite as natural as Techno was (but then again, no one was) but Tommy still had an affinity for it, that should he apply himself, could make him dangerous.

However, Tommy lacked discipline in his training. He sparred sometimes, but Tommy was always bouncing from one idea to the next. Phil wasn't sure when Tommy had gotten so much better, but it had been quite some time since he'd sparred with Tommy, admittedly, so he couldn't tell when Tommy had gotten better. That also meant Phil wasn't exactly sure how Tommy had gotten better.

“I’m already dangerous, fuck you,” Tommy said, glaring up at Technoblade. “MY middle name is danger!”

“Mate, I can say that it definitely isn’t,” Phil said, more than a little glad to at least hear Tommy sounding like himself, even if there was something going on that they weren’t telling him “You don’t have a middle name.”

Tommy crossed his arms “Whose fuckin’ fault is that”

“Wilbur’s the one who brought you home.” Phil pointed out, “Take it up with him.”

“I’m Tommy Danger Innit!” Tommy said proudly “I gave myself the name, too late.”

“That’s a dumb name.” Technoblade said, “But come on, daylight is a burnin’, and I got things to do other than babysit you.”

“You aren’t babysitting me” Tommy protested “You offered to train me! And, your name is literally Technoblade. That isn’t even a name!”

“Whatever,” Technoblade said as he ushered Tommy out the door. Philza let out a long sigh as the door clicked shut behind them, and he buried his face in his hands. Tommy, apparently, had at least acknowledged something was going on, but Techno wouldn’t tell him?

That sounded more like Wilbur, than Techno. Techno didn’t tell him everything, but this was kinda fucking important and since Tommy had obviously not wanted to talk to him or Wilbur, he thought maybe Techno could shake it out of him. And apparently, it had, but instead of it getting Phil the answers he needed, Techno was keeping secrets.

And it was... strange. Technoblade liked Tommy, sure, but Phil wouldn’t pretend to fool himself into thinking that they were close.

So, what happened that made Technoblade agree not to tell Phil anything? He wasn't scared- he trusted Techno- but he was still worried about Tommy. Phil was getting too old for this, he decided, as he allowed himself a few more minutes of peace.

“Am I really going to show you that move?” Tommy asked, after finally stopping his rambling. He’d just talked, mostly to fill the silence that hung heavy between them, but *perhaps* because he might be a tiny bit nervous. Just a little. Never admit that though, it wasn’t very pog to be nervous, he’d survived literal wars for fuck’s sake. He could handle a little lie to Technoblade, or, at least dance around the truth.

He’d just chatted a lot, about absolutely nothing, since it felt like they'd walked forever and the silence was boring. They’d gone past the sparring pit and were in a clearing in the woods, a pretty good distance from the house. It made Tommy a little uneasy, but the longer he spent around Technoblade, the more he was certain that he wasn’t in imminent danger, so long as he carefully worded his answers. This Technoblade, while still the same, seemed more... human. A little less obsessed with anarchy shit.”Or was that just the fucking excuse, to get me away from Phil?”

“Oh, no, I want you to show me that.” tEchno said, as he turned to face Tommy, offering him a stone sword. “I mean, you didn’t quite get it, but it seemed very effective if you could.”

Tommy barked a laugh because he couldn’t help it. “What’s so funny?” Techno asked as he

Tommy debated answering but figured it couldn’t hurt. It wouldn’t tell tEchnoblade much that he probably didn’t already know. . “You showed it to me, bitch. No fucking clue where you learned it, but I learned it from you.”

“Huh,” Technoblade said but didn’t elaborate further and the look on his face was worse than almost anything he could have said. It was the stupid look, where Tommy could tell his brain was just firing away, trying to figure out what Tommy meant. Technoblade seemed like an oaf, all brawn, but he was just as smart as Wilbur, in his own way. Tommy had learned of that cold intelligence the hard way. He fucking hates it being pointed at him. It never ended well for him. “Well, let’s get to it.”

Tommy cracked a grin, even though unease still sat heavy in his chest at the idea of turning his sword against Technoblade. The last time he'd done so was still a little fresh. He'd spent the last two years fighting, a sword in his hands felt more natural than anything else he'd done since he'd been in the past. ``Sure, just be ready for me to destroy you, bitch. ”

“Ready to answer some questions, Tommy?” Technoblade said, and even though there was still snow on the ground Tommy was just laying in it. He didn't fucking care anymore. They'd practiced the disarming move for what felt like an hour, though Tommy wasn't totally sure. His arms were still far weaker than he was used to and his arms burned from the exertion that would have normally been pretty much nothing to him. Guess war made you fit or some shit.

“I already told you I might not answer, can't mess up the timelines,” Tommy warned, which, in his opinion, was a pretty good lie. Techno didn't know shit about time travel (not that Tommy did) but it sounded like a line out of one of those stupid bitch books Wil or Technoblade liked to read.

Tommy couldn't quite tell if Technoblade believed him or not- his face was impassive, even without the pig skull mask. It was strange seeing Techno without it, his face exposed. Even when they were living together, Technoblade had pretty much worn his mask constantly. He could only think of a few times that Techno had taken it off around Tommy. But, even with his face out in the open, Tommy couldn't get a read on Techno.

“You've already told me, and I'm sworn to secrecy. How can it mess the timeline up anymore?” Techno questioned.

Tommy frowned “It just can! What do you know about time travel, bitch?”

“What do you know?” Technoblade shot back “Do you know how you did it? ”

Tommy sighed, still sprawled in the snow. It was cold and wet, but it also felt good, through his coat. “Honestly, I’ve got no fucking idea. I didn’t come back here on purpose, not when things were finally- Not when I had a life going. I was in the middle of things. Big things!” Tommy was certain he hadn’t done it on purpose- he wasn’t sure what he would have done if he’d been given a choice, but it didn’t matter. Tommy had never had the luxury of making choices, and the universe hadn’t given him a fucking choice this time either.

“There isn’t a ton of magic on this server.” Technoblade mused with a frown, as he turned his gaze from Tommy off into the mountains. “I’m no expert, but I know Phil’s complaining to me about how hard it is enchantin’ things here. Heck, I remember how long it took to get the stuff to enchant my first sword.”

Tommy bit back his immediate instinct to correct Technoblade, because if Techno wasn’t asking, Tommy wasn’t offering. If none of them knew about the SMP, then maybe Tommy could keep them from going. Keep Wilbur and Tubbo from going anyway. . “What were you doin, in the future, right before you got zapped back?”

Tommy frowned as he tried to recall what happened before he’d woken up in his childhood bedroom. He wasn’t planning on telling Technoblade all of it, but Tommy did want to know how it happened. Maybe some universal force had locked the memories away because the harder he focused it seemed like his memory just got fuzzier.

“I don’t remember, exactly. I think it screwed shit up in my head a little, since I, you know, fucking time traveled. But I’m pretty sure I wasn’t doing anything magical. I wasn’t even in the Nether. I think I was on my way to Snowc - uh someone was in the woods with, well, I was off in the forest. I think I was cutting down trees. Yeah, I was cutting down trees. It was... -” Tommy closed his eyes, trying to grasp the fuzzy images floating at the edge of his brain. He’d been in the woods, and it was a little cold, and-

Niki was urging him to hurry up, pulling him along, every time he stopped. She seemed a little stressed and she kept glancing over her shoulder every few seconds like she was worried about something. Like they were going to be late for whatever she wanted to show him. Tommy wanted to cut down the trees. His axe was in his hands. He needed the wood for something. Tubbo wouldn’t mind. He needed to visit Tubbo. He had been so busy with the hotel and Tubbo had been so busy with Snowchester... Tommy would see Tubbo after this. Niki was pulling him again, even as he complained. It had to be important for Niki to show him. Niki didn’t talk to him much anymore- she didn’t like him much these days.

He wondered if maybe that was changing.

They had moved and Tommy was standing alone. Niki told him to wait. She said she was getting something? She forgot something. He was cold. He hadn't dressed for snow. Tommy wanted to leave. maybe he could cut down another-

And then Tommy was flying. He was falling. Tossed up and through the air like a ragdoll. There was ash in his mouth and his lungs bruised with smoke.

The ground was cold- it was too cold and he was too hot, everything burning, blood bubbling between his lips. He could smell fire. He couldn't move, as every nerve in his body screamed. His ears rang. Or, maybe someone was screaming. Was it him?

Someone was in his field of vision, but spots danced in front of his eyes, edges darkening. Someone had their hands on his face, leaning close. Were they screaming? They were shaking him. Tubbo. Tubbo was trying to talk to him, but everything hurt so bad. It hurt so bad, and his vision was swimming. Tubbo was screaming, maybe, and Tommy couldn't figure out why. Tommy was the one hurting. Tommy was the one dying. He was dying. He could feel himself falling away, different than every time before. He was dying. It hurt.

He wanted Tubbo to stop screaming. But it hurt too bad. Everything hurt and he couldn't even scream, couldn't move, only burning, felt the blood pooling in his mouth. It hurt so much worse than any other death. It hurt so bad, and he could feel himself falling apart, feel the pull of death, so strong, so-

"Tommy? Tommy. What's goin' on pal?"

Tommy started, shooting straight up from where he'd been sprawled in the snow, nearly knocking into Technoblade, who'd crouched down beside him, looking way too concerned. He took a deep breath, filling his lungs with air that was cold and clean, and forced himself to look around. He was on a different server. These trees were different. His lungs still burned with phantom fire, even in the cold morning air.

It was a different year. Not the same at all. Nowhere fucking near it. Whatever the fuck that was... it hadn't happened yet. Tommy clenched his hands in an attempt to hide their shaking. He could feel the tremors in his fingers, and it wasn't because of the snow. He could feel the phantom pain in his lungs, and in his bones.

Tommy squeezed his eyes shut as he tried to control his breathing, but that only made things worse. Tommy had been in explosions before but that, whatever that was- it was the worst. Dying hadn't ever hurt so much.

He could've fucking done it without ever having that memory back, thank you very much.

"You kinda zoned out on me." Techno said, staring at Tommy with squinted eyes "What was that about?"

And it must've fucked up his brain too because he found himself answering Techno's question before he could stop himself. Guess I unlocked a memory. Great. I think the last thing I did in the future was die. No, I know that's what happened. Think I got fucking blown to bits by something. That's the last thing I remember"

"You got blown up? How? You should be able to kill a creeper, and Phil banned Tnt after, well, you remember" Techno asked, and the sheer surprise in his voice nearly made Tommy laugh out loud. And maybe it was because he'd just relieved his third and final death, which meant he was supposed to be fucking dead, not sitting in the snow by someone who had actively tried to kill him. And Tommy had almost forgotten Phil had once banned TNT in their home server since Tommy, Tubbo, and Wilbur always had a little too much fun with it. After they'd nearly brought down the house, Phil had banned them from making TNT entirely. Tubbo had honestly taken it the hardest. His best friend, while seemingly peaceful, loved shit that went boom. He supposed that hadn't fucking changed for any of them.

"Yeah, I don't think it was TNT or a creeper," Tommy muttered, still too shaken up to even bother lying. His memories weren't clear, from the last couple of days in the future, but he was almost certain that Tubbo had been planning on testing the nukes he had been given soon. Or he would do all that. Fucking time travel. Made his head hurt. And Niki would've known when Tubbo was planning... Tommy felt ill. Niki had hated him, sure, but he hadn't thought she would ever... He shook his head. That Niki didn't exist anymore. "Doesn't really matter though. I have three lives again. I checked the other day."

Techno frowned “Doesn’t matter- I’m gonna come back to that. But, to me it sounds like when you died, your respawn glitched, and sent you back in time.”

Tommy shrugged “I guess” He had no ideas, really, because it was time-travel. Tommy didn’t know the first fucking things about it. He didn’t even know it was real until something had dumped him in the past, so he couldn’t really argue. It had to be a huge glitch, to send Tommy not just across time, but across servers. Tommy had never heard of a glitch that could cause that.

Technoblade narrowed his eyes “You don’t sound convinced.”

Tommy just shrugged. “I dunno, Technoblade, glitches are rare, and even then, it usually results in someone accidentally teleporting a few blocks, not ender damned time travel.”

“Do you have any better ideas?” Technoblade asked, arching an eyebrow. Tommy scowled. He didn’t, unfortunately. A glitch just seemed too easy. TommyInnit had never had anything come easy.

“No, I guess not,” Tommy grumbled, as much as he hated to admit it. “Doesn’t really matter, does it? I mean, I’m in the past. Doesn’t matter much how I ended up in this shit.”

“If you plan on gettin’ back to the future-”

Tommy barked a laugh, cutting off Technoblade. He was tired. He was angry. He was supposed to be dead, apparently, killed by Niki for the final, and honestly? He couldn’t blame her. If everyone had wanted him dead so badly, they had to be onto something right? And shit, maybe being dead would be easier than trying to deal with this time travel mess.

“I’m not trying dying again, to go back to a fucking future where- Dying isn’t fun, Tehcnoblade,” Tommy said, trying for joking, but even he could hear the bitter note to his voice. Techno had no idea what dying was really like- still didn’t in the future. Sure he’d come close, but he still had three lives. Tommy had lost all his. Technoblade couldn’t talk

about death. “I can handle it, of course, but I’m not wasting a life on that. You should understand that better than anyone.”

“I wasn't suggestion' we even try that Tommy.” Technoblade snapped “I’m not gonna kill you on a hunch. I was just offerin’ help to try and get you back to your time. I’ve got a couple of favors I could call in for some special enchanting books and such.”

Tommy shook his head. “Well, we already decided it was a glitch. I can’t go back.” And he couldn’t. It didn’t matter if he wanted to or not, if it was even possible, Tommy had to stay. He had to fix things. Everything he’d done, everything the others had done. Tommy could stop it. But, he just needed Technoblade to help him, without having to explain everything. “I just, need to make sure I, uh, preserve this timeline.”

“Tommy, you keep mentionin’ the timeline.” Technoblade said “but nothin’ specific. If I’m gonna help you ‘preserve’ it, you gotta give me somethin’”

That’s because Tommy was lying out of his ass about the timeline and trying to preserve it, but Technoblade didn’t know that, obviously. Tommy wouldn’t mind honestly if the old timeline exploded. But, Explaining that would require explaining everything that had gone wrong. And again. Tommy wasn’t about to fucking do that. Not when he could prevent his family from hating him this time.

Tommy wanted to scream. “I-Listen Technoblade. The future wasn’t perfect. I mean, I died so that of course wasn't ideal, but there were definitely some good things about it! I have to protect those! Besides, if I mess it up, the whole world might explode, or something. ”

Tommy really thought Technoblade wasn't going to buy it. Shit, Tommy watched the skepticism play out on Technoblade’s face. He halfway expected Technoblade to blackmail him into some more questions. It had been strange, coming downstairs, and hearing Technoblade actually tell Phil no. Because of Tommy. That had never happened before. Tommy was certain that he’d lost Techno’s favor though, from his half-assed answers and arguing. He just never could keep his mouth shut, could he? But, something shifted in Techno’s face

“Alright. That’s enough for now.” Technoblade said as he rose to his feet, dusting the snow off his cape “I’ve got more questions, but I’ve got a bit of readin’ to do. Some grindin’. Go..

hang out with Tubbo or something. We'll talk about this later.”

Tommy's eyes widened in surprise as Techno turned away, waving Tommy off with a casual hand motion. He didn't even bother to respond, just scrambled to his feet, and made a beeline for Tubbo's house. He wasn't quite running, but he definitely jogged, until he was out of Techno's line of sight.

What the fuck had that been? Techno normally would've pushed for answers, done whatever he needed to to get them from Tommy. So why hadn't he?

Chapter End Notes

1) uhh, my bad on how long it took to update. This chapter was almost 8k words long and I still wasn't done, so I just split it in half and gave ya'll a finished part. I just honestly got my ass kicked by my actual life, because college is fun, but less so when you have a job and full class load.

2) I got the best surprise of my life last time I updated because someone drew FANART(?!?!?!?) of my fic. So, please go check it out here: <https://twitter.com/CranberryWoodz/status/1363778425178136576?s=19> . It is so good go give the artist some love! It literally made my week!!!

3) Now, keep the spoilers out of the comments for people who haven't seen Tommy's stream today (bc it sucks seeing spoilers if you can't watch live like me), but how ya'll doing? Ya'll coping? I'm not. I bought myself donuts. I am posting this cause I know we all need it, and the next chapter may come tonight or tomorrow bc this is how I cope but no promises.

4) uhhh I love you guys, and I guess that's it! You all are literally the best fans and are always so sweet to me when I don't deserve it?? also ya'll I have more hits/kudos/comments on this fic than literally all of my other fics on my other account combined. I am flattered?

5) Tommy and Techno featured heavily in this one, but Wilbur makes his return to the stage in the next few chapters, along with a few other familiar faces that will show up in the next little bit. Got any guesses who? They aren't in the character tags yet, but I will update them later. Also, worry not, this will still mainly be an SBI family feature.

Anywho I've talked to much to strangers on the internet again, so I hope you enjoyed!

i remember the looks on their faces

Chapter Summary

Wilbur and Technoblade ponder what happens next.

Chapter Notes

Wilbur lore people, it's finally happening. Not much Tommy in this one, but we get some Wilbur lore and Technoblade thought process.

TW: implied minor self-harm, implied death?

Enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“I want my window back. It’s too fucking dark in my room.” Tommy complained, from one side of Wilbur. Tubbo was on Wilbur’s other side, as they trudged back towards the house.

“Well, only if you promise not to jump out of it again.” Wilbur was trying for teasing, but based on the look on Tommy’s face he felt short. It hadn’t entirely been a joke anyway.

“It all turned out fine, didn’t it?” Tommy snapped, crossing his arms “I won’t break my window again. I promise. It’s just too fucking dark.”

“What, are you scared of the dark now, Tommy?” Tubbo teased.

“No! I’m not fucking scared of the dark, like some pussy. I just miss having a window, idiot.”

“Kinda sounds like you might be.” Tubbo pressed, grinning a little.

Tommy snapped back, protesting loudly and a little violently, as he ran around Wilbur to shove Tubbo. Tubbo shoved him right back, of course, but Wilbur couldn't quite let himself get sucked into their argument. Normally he loved to antagonize Tommy, just as much as Tubbo did. He loved Tommy, but it was too easy to rile him up, and honestly, it was entertaining. When it wasn't annoying. But, Tommy was a little too upset. Wilbur might not have noticed, normally, or hell, maybe he would have pushed Tommy, pissed him off until he told Wilbur about it. But here had definitely been unease. Tommy was scared of the dark?

That was new. Tommy liked to pretend he wasn't scared of anything, desperately trying to prove himself, to someone, Wilbur wasn't entirely sure who, but Tommy really wasn't scared of much, in reality. Tommy had practically no self-preservation skills, and Wilbur had always, in some ways, admired Tommy's courage, even if the things that he and Tubbo got into would probably send him to an early grave, especially when they didn't tell him. (they were fun, most of the time. But, if they could be just half a hair more careful...)

So it was strange for Tommy to be scared of the dark. Tommy had never had a problem with the dark, even as a little kid, Tommy hadn't been bothered by it. But, apparently, whatever had happened in Tommy's head, had left him not only skittish around people. But scared of the dark too.

"Quit it you two." Wilbur finally snapped. They were still arguing, but it had moved on to something else entirely. "You said you had something you wanted to show us, Tubbo?"

Tubbo and Tommy had caught him outside (and no, he wasn't *avoiding* Technoblade. He just.. Didn't care if he saw Techno while he was here. Wilbur just happened to need to go outside, the second Technoblade came in) and Tubbo had been practically vibrating. Apparently, he'd gotten something "awesome" and wanted to show them. Wilbur honestly had no idea what to expect. Knowing Tubbo it could be a home-built bee farm or a pit of lava, that had a natural parkour course on it.

"We're almost there!" Tubbo said brightly, ducking out from the loose headlock Tommy had him in. "Come on!"

Tubbo bound ahead, Tommy hot on his heels. Wilbur didn't bother running, keeping an eye on them from a distance. When he finally caught up to them, Wilbur found them

scrambling up the side of a small mountain, to a clearing where Wilbur could see wool targets set up. Wilbur hauled himself up the rock facing, not quite as gracefully as Tubbo had, and when he got there, Wilbur found a bow and twelve arrows in a quiver.

“A bow?” Tommy was saying “Tubbo, that's lame, you dick, you dragged us all the way out here-”

“Fuck off, let me finish. They're enchanted arrows! They light shit on fire when you shoot them!” Tubbo exclaimed. And now that Tubbo mentioned it, Wilbur could see the faint shimmer of enchantment on the arrows.

“Where the hell did you get those?” Wilbur found himself asking. “Tubbo, how did you?”

Tubbo waved a hand “I stole them! I don't think they were going to be used anyway so it doesn't matter.”

“Tubbo, who did you steal them from? Dad doesn't keep enchanted weapons out!” Phil had his sword, of course, but even Wilbur hadn't bothered to enchant his sword beyond mending. He knew Phil kept some very dangerous weapons in his enderchest, but of course, none of them could access it. Even then, he wasn't sure that his dad bothered enchanting arrows. Enchanting on this server was a pain and enchanting arrows just felt like a waste.

Tubbo shrugged “That traveling group that came by in July. I just went when they weren't in their little camp and stole them. They looked fun!”

Wilbur shook his head “Tubbo, you're lucky they didn't catch you. Or kill you!”

Tubbo just shrugged. “They didn't!”

“Yeah!” Tommy exclaimed, “Because my best friend is fucking awesome like that!” He held his hand up for a high-five and Tubbo gave it to him.

Wilbur shook his head but grinned. “Alright, well, just don’t start a forest fire, but I want to see this in action.”

Tubbo and Tommy both lit up with grins. They’d have done it even if Wilbur said no, but enchanted arrows did sound cool. Besides, everything was so wet with the snow, even if they missed nothing could really burn.

Wilbur leaned against the single tree growing on the ledge as he watched them scramble to get everything set up, and bicker about who got to shoot first. Wilbur remembered the group Tubbo was talking about and wasn’t entirely surprised Tubbo managed to steal from them. He’d been the one to escort them out of the server, after all. Wilbur found his hand curling around the small book in his pocket.

Wilbur saw smoke rising, curling in the distance, just above the tops of the trees in the early morning light. Something like dread curled in his stomach. That was the wrong direction to be Tubbo’s house, not to mention Tubbo was sleeping on their couch as it was. The nearest village was too far to even see smoke from, and no one else lived that close.

Occasionally people wandered through, but Phil had drilled the mistrust of strangers into them since before Wilbur could even walk. Wilbur might’ve been human, worthless, to trophy hunters, but he, Tommy, and Tubbo could be used as leverage, or simply just killed as collateral damage. Wilbur didn’t remember it clearly, but once they’d almost been taken, or killed. His dad had hidden them, and when he came to get them, Wilbur remembered the blood on his hands, as he pulled them close.

Wilbur, Tommy, and Tubbo were human, and Phil wasn’t there, but if bounty hunters were this close, it wouldn’t matter. They’d probably just kill them. Or, more likely, it was just a random traveler, passing through. That wasn’t unheard of, his Dad driving away a stranger, occasionally giving them a bag of resources, flying high above them until they were far enough away to be safe.

But, Wilbur was the only one home. He hoped that they weren’t bounty hunters. Despite being 6’5, and having a diamond Wilbur knew he wasn’t particularly intimidating. He’d always been better with convincing with words than with violence.

But, Wilbur still carried his sword by his side, just in case, as he headed out, towards the rising smoke. It didn't take very long to come upon them, but Wilbur heard them long before he saw them.

It wasn't hard, in the quiet of the forest, and Wilbur easily picked out three distinct voices as he slowly approached them. "I can't believe you got us lost." someone complained, and there was the distinct sound of someone getting a thump on the back of his head "Ow!"

"We aren't lost." someone else growled, sounding irritated. "Just taking a detour. Enjoying the scenery, or some shit."

"Schlatt we're definitely lost," Someone else, a woman this time snapped. Her voice was accented differently than Wilbur or Tommy's, similar to the Schlatt guy, but not as abrasive. "We've been wandering around this server for days!"

"We aren't lost!" The loud guy, Schlatt, shouted, and the two promptly started shouting at each other, and the other two voices

Wilbur, despite the fact that they were shouting, relaxed. These people were definitely just lost, and Wilbur could, gladly, point them in a direction away from his house.

Wilbur made his way to their campsite, set up between several trees. A guy almost as tall as he was, with horns sprouting from his head, was screaming at a woman considerably shorter, but she was screaming right back, hands planted on her hips. A girl with pink hair was sitting by the dying fire, frowning and another guy, who was rubbing the back of his head was sitting at the edge of a makeshift tent.

"I don't mean to interrupt, but did I hear you lot say you were lost?" Wilbur called, as he stepped into their line of sight.

"Fuck off, dickhead." The man, Schlatt, snapped, turning a dark glare towards Wilbur "We aren't lost."

“Yes, we are.” the woman snapped, glaring at Schlatt “This idiot got us lost in these woods two days ago! We’ve been wandering ever since and haven’t seen another person in days! And he keeps claiming he isn’t lost.”

She offered Wilbur a smile that was a little tight, but Wilbur couldn’t help the way his heart rate jumped. So if you could please help us, uh, what’s your name?”

“WilburSoot.” Wilbur offered, with a smile “And I absolutely can. Where are you trying to go?”

“Thank you. We’re just trying to-”

“I have a map, Sally.” Schlatt interrupted, throwing his hands up “You can’t get lost if you have a map!”

Sally closed her eyes and took a deep breath, but before they could start shouting again, Wilbur jumped in. “Did you get it from the admins?”

“Uh, yeah?” Schlatt said, leveling Wilbur with a look that just screamed, ‘are you stupid?’.

Wilbur studied the map, then smirked slightly. “The admins on this server are useless. This map is actually completely wrong. If you’ve been trying to get back to the port on this map, you’ve been going the wrong direction for; oh, two days.”

“Two days?” Charlie groaned, and flopped back onto the forest floor “I’m gonna kill you Schlatt.”

“Well, how was I supposed to know the stupid admins gave me a bad map!” Schlatt said, turning back to Charlie “You didn’t know either!”

“Guys, please.” the pink-haired woman begged “Please stop shouting. It isn’t helping anything!”

“She’s right. Especially since we need to get packing. If it’s two days the other direction we need to go on and head out, if we want to get out of here this week.” Sally paused and turned to Wilbur. “Can we do it in two days?”

“If you want to go back out to port, then it’ll probably take you three days,” Wilbur said, rolling up their rather useless map and handing it back to her, and even though the morning air was still cool, her fingers were warm as they brushed against his. He couldn’t help but note the way her face fell, and before Wilbur could even consider what he was saying, the words were out of his mouth “But, lucky for you, I know a much faster way out of the server.”

Wilbur resisted the urge to wince because maybe showing a group of complete strangers the secret port his dad had made years ago wasn’t exactly the smartest move. But, Sally’s face lit up with a smile, and Wilbur found himself returning it as his hesitations melted away.

“You do?” Sally asked, “How much shorter?”

Wilbur ended up leading the strange group through the woods. It didn’t take them long to pack up their stuff, despite the way Schlatt complained and moaned, glaring at Wilbur from across the clearing. He only stopped when Sally threw some stuff at him and told him to pack it up and be useful.

But, then they were on their way. Wilbur lead them south, arcing their path just enough so that they avoided his house, mostly so that he didn’t risk Tommy tagging along for the rest of the trip.

It was a four-hour walk, and somehow it was both the longest and shortest four hours of Wilbur’s life.

Schlatt, after accusing him of a multitude of things, such as leading them into sex trafficking, or a cannibalism cult, eventually warmed up to him, (at least Sally said he did after Wilbur kept him from falling into a ravine that was hidden by bushes). Mostly he just allowed it with all of them. They were a group of friends, who had started out as strangers, just traveling the world, joining random servers, having fun with whatever happened in each one.

“We started a cult in one of them!” Charlie said with a grin “We didn’t mean to, it was a joke, but hey, if the villagers want to worship the Smile god I’m not going to complain.”

They were hilarious, as a group. Sally would argue with anyone, had a spark of intelligence and fire in her eyes, and a smile that Wilbur couldn’t help but be drawn to. Charlie was hilarious, in an unexpected way, and Niki seemed quiet, but Wilbur found himself laughing at what little she did have to say. Schlatt was loud, brash, and a jackass, but Wilbur couldn’t find it in himself to hate the guy. The group’s dynamic was strange but familiar. Obviously, they had been traveling together a long time. Eventually, they reached the glowing nether portal, hidden in a small stone structure, covered in vines and moss.

Charlie and Niki went first, vanishing into the glowing portal, leaving Sally, Wilbur, and Schlatt standing in the overworld.

“You know,” Schlatt hesitated just outside the portal “You could come with us, WilburSoot. You seem like a cool guy. Way too smart to be stuck in this podunk server forever.”

Wilbur blinked in surprise “You want me to come with you?”

“Yeah, why not. You didn’t kill us, you’re actually occasionally funny, and I think you’ve got potential Wilbur. We could do great things together.”

And Wilbur... Wilbur had never really wanted to stay on his server forever. Not when he knew there were things to do- things to learn, outside of the boundaries of his home. And outside the few trips, he’d ever been on, to tame places where he’d been able to roam, but only in the big cities. But, he didn’t want to fight, like Technoblade and Phil did, or spend hours mining and grinding, he wanted to have fun. He wanted adventure. And Schlatt was right, Wilbur

had no idea how easy it was to fall into the group's dynamic. He hadn't even realized he wanted them to offer until it was sitting there. And... he couldn't do it.

"I-I can't," Wilbur said finally. As much as he desperately wanted to. And it would be so easy, just to walk out the portal and.. leave. It had to be easy, right? Technoblade did it. Phil seemed like he was almost there. How hard could it be?

But, he couldn't. Tommy had just turned 14. Tubbo wasn't even 15 yet. Dad had been gone for almost two weeks. Wilbur had no idea when Phil was coming back. As much as he wanted to, as much as he desperately didn't want to see Sally's hopeful smile fall or Schlatt glare, Wilbur didn't have a choice.

"Why not?" Schlatt snapped "What could there possibly be in this server interesting enough to keep you from leaving?"

"It's not that I don't want to leave. Ender I would like nothing more." Wilbur let out a laugh, and the bitterness in it caught him off guard. But, I... I have responsibilities here. I can't just walk away."

He wasn't Technoblade. He wouldn't just walk away. He wasn't his dad, who always seemed to have a foot out the door. Wilbur made Tommy a promise. He'd keep it.

Schlatt scoffed "Whatever. Your loss, Wilbur. If you ever wise up and decide to leave this place, maybe I'll see you around. Come on Sally, we gotta go. Stop making eyes at him. I've been holding back puke this whole time."

Schlatt entered the portal before Sally could retort, and Wilbur turned to look at Sally. "I'm sorry. My brothers-"

"Don't apologize." Sally said "If you think you're doing the right thing, then do it. It just might not be the right time. But, if it ever is, come find us."

"How will I find you?" Wilbur asked, and he realized how close he was standing to Sally" You all don't have a plan and I don't know when I'll ever get to leave.."

“Here.” Sally said, pressing a folded paper in his hand “If you ever decide to leave, just send me a message. We’ll find you. Now, I’ve got to go. See you later, Wilbur!”

Wilbur watched as she sprinted into the portal, paper still gripped in his hand, and stood there a long time before finally turning back to the house.

--

Wilbur hadn’t necessarily forgotten the group, no, but he’d been busy, even after Phil returned and he hadn’t had time to think about it. Then, well, when Tommy jumped out a window and very nearly died. He hadn’t considered it since then, but it was still in his pocket. Still tucked away. He probably didn’t even need the note- he’d long memorized what it said, but still, he kept it.

“Wilbur! Wilbur look!” Tubbo called, breaking him out of his reprieve. Tubbo let an arrow fly, and it hit just shy of its mark, but the flames still managed to jump onto the wool blocks, setting the lopsided il on fire.

“Holy shit!” Wilbur muttered as the wool target burst into flames. He grinned “Tubbo what the hell, those are wicked.”

“It’s fucking cool.” Tubbo agreed, preening a little.

“I want to try,” Tommy whined, reaching for the bow. “I want to set shit on fire.”

“Fine.” Tubbo agreed, “But the next one is mine since it’s my stuff.”

“Yeah, yeah, whatever,” Tommy muttered, as he notched an arrow.

“Don’t start a forest fire,” Wilbur warned, only half-joking. Tommy wasn’t a terrible shot, but he got easily distracted, and it was just as likely that he would hit the trees. However, Tommy let the arrow fly without hesitation and landed perfectly in the center of the dark wool blocks that were probably supposed to be an enderman, dead center. It immediately burst into flames. Tommy turned around, with a smug grin on his face. “I’m a better shot than you,” he said, holding the bow over Tubbo’s head. “I’m the Big Man! Biggest man! I’m the supreme shooter”

“Give it back,” Tubbo said, jumping to reach it, but Tommy was tall enough that he kept it just out of reach “Tommy!”

Wilbur rolled his eyes, but couldn’t help but laugh as Tubbo, after a moment of consideration, drove an elbow into Tommy’s stomach, causing Tommy to hunch over reflexively double over, bending low enough that Tubbo snatched the bow back. “Ha!” Tubbo said, grinning victoriously.

Tommy glared up “Bitch.” he said and Tubbo just smiled sweetly and flipped him off.

“Stop fighting with weapons in your hands.” Wilbur said, finally, “If one of you gets caught on fire, then we’ll have to explain that to dad and I’ll make the two of you do it.”

Tubbo started rambling about something, probably about how they’d be fine, and Phil wouldn’t need to find out, but Wilbur couldn’t help but catch Tommy’s reaction. Tommy just rolled his eyes and crossed his arms. “Yeah,” Tommy muttered quietly like no one was supposed to hear him, “As if he would even really care.”

And Wilbur wasn’t sure what that was supposed to mean. Sure, their dad played favorites- but that wasn’t new information- but, Phil obviously cared enough to worry for them, sometimes. Especially about Tommy, in recent days, though he supposed that was a relatively new development. Tubbo either hadn’t heard Tommy over his own monologue or just ignored it, and Wilbur wasn’t sure Tommy had meant to say it, so he let it slide, but noted it away, among the long list of other things that were wrong with Tommy.

It reminded him of those first few months after Tommy moved in when Tommy was still unsure of his place, and half-convinced they were going to throw him out for simply existing. But, the difference was, Tommy now just seemed... tired. Under all his bravado, there was

just exhaustion in his eyes that Wilbur couldn't help but pick up on. It was strange. Wilbur wasn't as good at as many things as his father, or Technoblade, but he was smart. He was good at reading people and he could, usually, read Tommy like a book. So that's why it scared him, behind the exhaustion, was the blankness. The way he just couldn't quite get a read on Tommy like normal.

The look in his eyes sometimes reminded Wilbur just a little too much of the look in Phil's eye when someone would come knocking at their door, looking for the Angel of Death. Normally his dad took them outside. There was never any blood on his hands when he returned, but the haunted look that lingered in his eyes for days told Wilbur all he needed to know.

But, Tommy was Wilbur's kid brother. Tommy had only ever killed mobs, just like Wilbur. Wilbur didn't know everything about his father's past, but he knew enough. And, Wilbur could remember, when he and Technoblade had been thirteen, Wilbur noticed the look in his brother in Technoblade's eyes. Wilbur never learned what happened on that specific trip, and he wasn't sure he wanted to. It was after that that Technoblade truly began to pull away. He hadn't seemed to care that Wilbur wanted to help.

Something cold settled in Wilbur's chest. He knew what their Dad thought was happening. That's why he sent for Technoblade. If that was true.... Wilbur pressed his mouth into a thin line. Wilbur had watched Tommy go off with Technoblade twice now, and sure, Tommy had sat with him in silence the day before, but that was more concerning. Tommy hadn't talked to him. Had he talked to Technoblade? No one would tell him anything, that was for certain. Stupid Wilbur, who couldn't really fight, who didn't go on grand adventures, couldn't handle it. They'd never thought he could handle it, ~~even if he could apparently handle raising Tommy.~~

Wilbur had been helpless when he was thirteen, watching his family start tearing apart. Wilbur wasn't sure, if Tommy really was going down that same path, that he could hold it together any longer.

Technoblade and Wilbur both had bookshelves in their rooms. Wilbur's had always been filled with books about politics, government, and culture, with the empty space crammed full of old journals, notebooks, and half-finished songs he hadn't let Technoblade see in years. That was

what Phil had brought back, from supply runs or some tamer trips for Wilbur. Paper and journals or books.

Technoblade had his own shelf, filled with mythology, philosophy, and science. He didn't write much, so his was filled to the brim with books he'd take from Phil or gotten on his own exploits. He had taken a few of his favorites with him, and most of them had survived the years of travels, sitting comfortably in his inventory, occasionally in his houses.

However, a majority of them were left behind. It simply wasn't practical to carry that many books, not when he needed his inventory open to more tactically useful objects. Not to mention, him having a ton of books would kinda kill the vibe. He did have a reputation to uphold after all, and carrying around a library didn't really feed into that.

However, Technoblade wasn't a complete brute, despite what most people thought. He knew more about things (besides killing and potatoes) than most people would give him credit for. Enchanting was one of them.

It wasn't his strongest suit- he could always be better, faster- but it was something he had learned about extensively in recent years, especially with weapons.

But, that all happened after he left Philza's house. The server they lived on had little magic. The admins didn't do much server maintenance and lots of things had gone wild. The magic, normally maintained by balancing source codes had been nearly depleted and worked more slowly here. This server wasn't the worst he'd been on, but after having lived on countless other servers, he could feel the difference in his bones. He knew that Phil could too, especially both of them being hybrids, (even if he still wasn't certain what Phil was a hybrid of, exactly), but had long learned to live with it. Techno could remember that often Phil would spend hours enchanting things on other servers when they would take supply runs or longer trips to servers where Phil could risk time and supplies for the enchantment.

Most of the books in the house were crammed into one of those two places, but Phil kept his enchanting books in his own room, in a chest kept under the floor. Techno had no idea if Tommy and Wilbur knew it was there, though he assumed Wilbur did, but Phil had shown him when he was around 10.

“Techno, these are the enchanting books. And my private collection.” Phil had said, kneeling on the floor, Techno beside him “I don’t use them much here, but I wanted to show you where I kept them. Just in case.”

Technoblade still wasn't sure what the just incase had meant exactly. Phil had shown him how to enchant swords, and weapons, Wilbur had learned too, though it was a couple of years later, when Technoblade already had an enchanted sword and axe, though Wilbur was still learning how to properly wield a sword.

Technoblade had never read the books beyond what he needed for enchanting, and have never touched the old tomes at all. He wasn't forbidden- Phil didn't forbid knowledge in the house, even if he strongly discouraged some of it-- it had just never interested him. Technoblade found magic useful, but work, and logic, were much more useful. In the heat of battle, it ultimately came down to sword to sword, skin to skin. Not any sort of enchantment.

However, Technoblade wasn't in the heat of battle, though he would much rather be. Chat voices their approval, rising in volume sharply, as they called for blood, before quieting to the normal drone. Time travel wasn't something Technoblade had thought possible, and he hadn't been convinced that Tommy was from the future until he saw the kid freak out today.

Tommy still hadn't told him anything, really, except that he'd died. Apparently. Technoblade wasn't really affected by death, these days. He'd spent the last few months farming potatoes, but before that, he simply fought. He had taken lives, canon, and competition, countless times. He had joined a server on the brink of war, more than once, simply to fight. Never for the government, never for the people in charge, because power corrupts, but for freedom. For the eradication of government, because it never ended well.

Only once had he fought for a country. And he would never make that mistake again.

His knuckles still ached, from the trees he'd cleared, after talking to Tommy. It was as close as he could get to blood, offering the cuts on his own hands in lieu of a real fight. Instead of real blood. It didn't quiet the voices, but it took the edge off the screaming.

Techno was grateful the house was quiet, for once. He wasn't sure he could uphold Tommy's promise right now, if Phil asked him.. Hell even if Wilbur did The chat, the moment that Tommy had uttered the words 'I died' began roaring for blood.

Technoblade had never quite understood Tommy. The kid was too loud, all ideas, never followed through, always tripping over himself to prove he was the best even when he obviously wasn't. Even then he'd mostly followed Wilbur around, copying everything he did, except for what Tommy deemed boring. It was only sometimes he followed Technoblade, mostly just to piss him off.

They weren't close. He shouldn't feel the rage burning up in his chest as Chat called for blood for a boy he'd hardly talked to in years.

But.

Tommy was only sixteen, in whatever future he'd come from, and he'd died. Technoblade probably didn't have any right to be so upset. It was uncommon for people to lose their first life before they turned twenty. Most people did it when they were eighteen or so, and it could be earlier in particularly violent servers.

Still, in most places, a sixteen-year-old losing their first life would be considered a tragic thing. Somethin' to pity.

On this server, it would be. How had Phil let it happen? Or Wilbur? Tommy was stupid and reckless, and so was Wilbur, but he'd claimed it wasn't a creeper or TNT. Maybe a firework went wrong? But an explosion should've been preventable. What the hell had Tommy been doing? Probably manage to get some TNT or somethin' stupid, but still. The kid said he was in the woods. Maybe it was a creeper, and he was remembering wrong. He hadn't exactly seemed with it.

Technoblade wasn't sure. He'd also never heard of a respawn glitch so big, so, as he pried the loose flooring up in Phil's room, he hoped that there would be a book that at least mentioned it, or respawn glitches.

Technoblade gathered a few of the books, leaving all the enchanting books untouched, before closing the chest and moving the boards back into place. He didn't bother putting them in his inventory for the short trip up to his room. His room had remained nearly untouched, including the small table by his bed, with a chair pulled up to it. Technoblade dumped the

books on one side and opened the old chest in his room, pulling out an old notebook that was pretty well empty.

He settled into his chair, an old pen ready to write, and flipped open the first book.

Technoblade was startled from his note-taking by a sharp knock at the door. His head snapped up, and it took a split second for him to realize where he was. “Phil says it’s time to eat if you want.” Wilbur was on the other side of his door, and Technoblade could hear the slight irritation in his voice.

Technoblade straightened up as he put his third book down and grimaced as his back protested. He’d been hunched over the desk, engrossed in the latest book, scribbling notes in the old notebook. Which, he was almost done with that book, and while it hadn’t been particularly helpful, he had to read all of it, just in case he was missing something. “I’ll get somethin’ for lunch in a bit,” he called, settling back over his desk. He would finish this book and then-

“It’s seven at night,” Wilbur said flatly from the other side of the door. Technoblade blinked and looked back at the window and huh, it was dark now. The glowstone in the corner of his room was lighting it well enough he hadn’t even noticed the change in daylight.

Oops.

He probably should eat, but, he was almost done with that book, and still had four more piled beside him. “I’m alright. I’ll eat later.”

Wilbur was quiet enough that Techno was certain he’d already walked off before he finally sighed “Fine. Suit yourself.”

Techno sighed as he looked at the pile of books. He'd already read two and was almost done with another. He continued to read, occasionally scribbling in his notebook, which wasn't nearly as full as he would like it to be. Eventually, he came to the end of the old tome and frowned. So far, he'd found no mention of time travel, and only some vague mention of how respawn mechanics even worked. Nothing about a glitch strong enough to send someone back in time.

Of course, Tommy didn't seem too worried about why it happened- he'd definitely been adamant about not going back, which was strange, considering how much he seemed hell-bent on protecting whatever timeline stuff he kept spouting. If he wanted to future protected so badly, why didn't he want to go back?

Technoblade let out a long sigh.

It would be so much easier to just... go to Phil. Tell him everything. Or Wilbur. Tommy seemed less concerned about Wilbur knowing, less scared of him at least, and Wilbur had always been better at these things. Phil too. He still was

And.. he could leave again. He could go back to potato farming, though that wouldn't be nearly as fun since his rival finally backed down and eventually left the server from shame or something. Of course, he'd been meaning to make the competition circuit again, since rumors were circulating about retirement. Technoblade could find a war server if he wanted, but that was always a risk.

It would be easy. Phil wanted to talk to him and probably hadn't only because the walls were far too thin in the house to keep everyone from hearing what was being said. Wilbur, while angry at Techno, would probably listen about Tommy.

And he could leave.

No !

It was unusual for Chat to speak unanimously. And while there were a few dissenters as always, the majority of them screamed, so loud that Techno dropped his pen, clutching the

side of his temples.

It was louder than Chat had been since the night they'd woken him from a dead sleep, telling him that he needed to help Philza. And now, Chat was telling him to help Tommy. For some reason.

Help him!

You promised!

He's literally a time-traveler

He's your brother

Technoangst

He needs help

Blood. Blood. Blood. Blood.

If you leave, I'll spam E in the chat constantly for the rest of your life

Tommy is annoying

Help Tommy!

Tommy needs someone!

He trusts you!

If you leave I will just spam all caps.

Brotherblade!

Pog!

Don't you dare leave!

Help him!

"Guys." He muttered quietly, "Guys, come on. I'm really not-he doesn't even wanna tell me-"

Why did they think- why did everyone seem to think he could help Tommy. He barely knew the kid! Really! Technoblade wasn't a babysitter, he wasn't a brother, he was the *Blood God* . Why-

Technoblade flinched as they protested sharply. "Chat, please. Let's be rational here."

That of course, was the wrong thing to say. Chat starting shouting, a cacophony of seemingly random phrases that made no sense, too overlapping for him to even try to pick out what they were saying. Technoblade gritted his teeth as he tried in vain to ignore the Chat. Normally he could, even when they were loud, but they were insistent and so unanimous, and-

Technoblade slammed a hand down on his desk "Chat." he growled lowly. "Fine. Fine. I'm stayin', now please, please shut up."

It wasn't instant, but slowly, the voices quieted, to a manageable hum and Technoblade slumped in relief. His head was still throbbing, and his stomach growled. As much as he wanted to continue reading, he wouldn't be able to see the words on the page if he continued like this. Maybe some food would help his headache.

So, he closed the book and pushed away from the table. He wasn't sure exactly what time it was, but both Wilbur and Tommy's doors were closed and the house was quiet. Huh. It probably meant they were sleeping. At least maybe he could have a little more time to himself.

Techno stepped lightly, hoping not to wake Phil as he made his way into the kitchen. He hadn't realized how hungry he was, until he had a loaf of bread out, slicing a few pieces. He debated toasting them, but it was too much work, so he simply munched on the bread in the dark of the kitchen as he stared into the backyard.

Chat was quieter now, apparently satisfied by his decision to help Tommy. Tommy wasn't.. He didn't seem to be a bad kid. He hadn't been one, the last time Techno really saw him, just annoying and loud. He was smart, too, in an unexpected way. It didn't seem like much had changed. Except, maybe Chat had latched onto him.

Maybe Chat was in Tommy's head, as much as they liked to talk about him

Technoblade was debating on whether or not he wanted to take an apple up to his room, since he was still hungry when the floor creaked behind him.

He turned around to find Phil standing there. He was dressed in his long coat, hat pulled down low on his head, and trusty sword strapped to his side. His wings were tucked against his back, and even in the dark, Technoblade could see the somber expression on his face.

“Take a walk with me Technoblade?”

Chapter End Notes

1) Uhh yeah this is the longest chapter I've written for this fic at 6.2k. Most of it was in a backstory, that honestly? was longer than that. I cut about 1.5k words that really didn't fit the vibe. The vibe of this chapter is a little different, mostly bc its not about Tommy? Idk, I enjoyed it, but Tommy will come back next chapter! With the angst! Does the child get a break? absolutely not.

2) I have a vague plan for the next sections of the story. Yay! Plans! Unfortunately, plot crept in so that will be mixed with angst and comfort.

3) okay, SO I'm gonna own up to something. I absolutely am projecting onto Wilbur here, Techno too, but right now Wilbur I'm trying really hard not to let that bleed in, but I am absolutely doing it lmao.

4) Love reading yall's theories about who will show up/what will happen next! Let me know what you guys think will happen next, who might show up, or even if you just liked it!

Anyway, I'm very tired so good night! You guys rock

some would scream and some would sing

Chapter Summary

No one has a good time

Chapter Notes

TW: Semi-graphic descriptions of violence and death in the Italics section.

Not got much to say, except you guys get 4/4 SBI POV in this chapter. Didn't mean to but it happened.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The silence hung heavy between Phil and Technoblade as they walked through the dark forest, only broken by the occasional rattle of bones or creeper hiss of a mob that was easily dispatched by either Technoblade's enchanted sword, or Philza's bow. Phil had no particular direction in mind, he just needed to walk away for a few minutes. He'd taken to the sky, for just an hour, earlier, but it had only seemed to make the itch under his skin work. He wasn't built to stay inside.

"It isn't like you to beat around the bush, Philza." Technoblade said gruffly "You got something to say, say it."

Phil let out a long sigh "I don't even fucking know where to start. But how about with whatever's going on with you and Tommy? Why can't you tell me?"

Technoblade was still staring straight ahead, and Phil's frown deepened as he watched Technoblade's jaw clench, even in the dim light, his eyesight was good enough that low light didn't hinder him too much.

"I already told ya, Phil, I can't tell you," Technoblade said, finally. "I wish I could tell you. Believe me, I'm not cut out for this kinda stuff. I'm much better and fighting. Or famin'. But,

Tommy told me, for some reason. I don't think he meant to if it makes you feel better."

Phil shook his head "I don't think it does, mate."

Techno pursed his lips before continuing "He made me promise. Kid had a panic attack, Phil. I-I had to get him to calm down or he was gonna bolt again. Sure, I probably could've stopped him, but who knows what woulda happened next. Promising to keep quiet was all I could do Phil unless you just wanted me to lock him up."

Silence fell between them, as Phil contemplated what Technoblade said. Part of him wanted to push for details, because damn it, he needed to know. How was he supposed to help Tommy, if he didn't know what was going on? Then again, had Phil even really helped Technoblade? Techno didn't even think of them as his family anymore, as much as it pained Phil to admit that, and his son was known as the blood god. Phil had done the best he could, but... had done enough the first time? Could he even really help Tommy?

His silence must've stretched on too long because Technoblade broke it with a slightly hesitant "...you didn't want me to lock him up, did you?"

"Of course not." Phil said, shaking his head. "I just.. Technoblade I asked you to come to help me with Tommy. You promised me you'd try to help him, Techno."

"Please don't try to use that against me, Phil," Technoblade said, and for the first time during their conversation, Phil heard a hint of truth agitation directed at him. "I'm keepin' my promise to you, by keepin' my promise to Tommy. I coulda easily let him run off, Phil. And If I tell you now, that's good and well. But, if Tommy finds out I broke that promise, he'll be gone by mornin'. And if that's what you want, that's fine by me."

Phil tried to hide his surprise and the small flicker of guilt in his chest. Technoblade rarely got so short with him, though he wasn't surprised by the honesty. Technoblade never pulled punches. "Okay, Techno."

"Okay?" Technoblade repeated back " You aren't gonna make me tell you?"

“Do you want me to?” Phil wasn’t going to. As much as he despised the helplessness that sat heavy on his chest, the frustration at his sons, he trusted Technoblade. He had called him for a reason, after all. But, Technoblade, only a few days ago had seemed eager to leave, and had resisted the idea until Phil had practically begged. “I never wanted to force you to stay.”

Technoblade snorted “No. You’re not keepin’ me here Phil. That’d be chat. They’ve latched onto the little gremlin, for whatever the reason and have threatened to just, scream if I tell you. I just hoped you wouldn’t be mad.”

Phil chuckled, despite it not being particularly funny. “I’m not... angry at you, or Tommy. Mostly just at myself. Why can’t he fucking trust me, Technoblade? No offense to you, of course, but why would he trust you more?”

Technoblade snorted. “He doesn’t trust me, Phil. I’m pretty sure he’s still lyin’ to me, at least partially. And I don’t know why he doesn’t trust you, Phil. I don’t know much about what he’s telling me, to be honest. It’s driving me nuts.”

“Is that why you took my books?” Phil asked quietly. He’d noticed the boards had been adjusted, ever so slightly in his room. Wilbur and Tommy didn’t know what was down there, and Tommy wouldn’t have read it even if he knew what was under the boards. The books Technoblade had borrowed were ones that he’d collected himself, some from his first adventures, but many from nearly a decade ago when he was trying to learn something, anything about the voices in Technoblade’s head.

They had taught him nothing. It did not sit well with him that Technoblade had turned to them now.

Technoblade shrugged “Yes. I... needed answers, since some of them I don’t think Tommy can even give me. I had no idea where else to start. Figured that was my best bet, on this server.”

Phil grimaced “Techno, those books... They weren’t much help when you were a kid. I dunno how much they’ll help you with Tommy.”

Technoblade sighed and for just a moment, Phil thought he might cave- might tell him what answers he was looking for, exactly, but instead, Technoblade offered a wry smile “I’ve gotta try, Phil. Worst that happens is I don’t get any answers but learn a little. Might be useful someday, if not now.”

Phil nodded. “I suppose.”

Silence fell again as they walked further into the woods. Technoblade easily dispatched a stray zombie. “I still don’t like this mate. I fucking hate it. I don’t blame you. But I don’t like it.”

“Me neither Phil.” Technoblade said quietly “Me neither.”

The next few days passed much the same. Technoblade would force Tommy out, either first thing in the morning, or a couple of hours before dusk. Tommy wanted to spar but asked to do so outside of the sparring ring. He didn’t want Wilbur or Phil watching, especially since he was definitely pulling out moves that he had no right knowing how to do. Technoblade would usually put Tommy through the paces for an hour or so, before asking his questions.

As much as Techno wanted to force Tommy to give him answers about the big things (chiefly, how, exactly, he’d died and what his goal was in the past) that approach didn’t work. Tommy would simply lie to him, and While Technoblade was almost certain he was lying, he really had no way of proving it and that meant he couldn’t call Tommy on his bull.

But, Tommy loved to talk- his mouth tended to run when he got nervous, or bored, or happy, or literally any emotion ever- so his strategy was mostly just to get Tommy talking. Usually, the kid would slip up at least once and say something he didn’t mean to, or hedge around something that he wouldn’t quite say before pivoting wildly.

The pivots had worked a couple of times, Techno realized, but once he figured out the tactic, Technoblade let Tommy think he was distracting him when he was really making a mental list of all the little details Tommy dropped. He was recording them in the notebook that also contained the research from the books Phil let him borrow, and to be honest?

Technoblade was getting concerned. The picture that Tommy was painting, even unconsciously, was... confusing, at best.

Tommy seemed to still vary between insisting that the timeline must be preserved, yet, Tommy still seemed... scared. Tommy was just scared. Hidden under the bravado, annoyance, and sheer force of will, it was easy to see. Tommy was scared. He was still wary of Technoblade. He no longer looked terrified, but he was constantly on guard. Constantly wary. A few times, when Technoblade had a sword to Tommy's throat, he could still see the fear in his eyes, for just a second.

And Tommy just fought too well. He was no PvP champion, and not close to a match for Techno himself, but still far better than anyone who'd only ever fought mobs should. He wasn't a natural the way Technoblade was, born to hold a blade, but it was like fighting was his second nature.

He had nightmares. He didn't scream all night, but almost every night, there was a half-choed scream that woke him, up,, followed by the sound of Wilbur's door opening. Tommy hadn't let him in yet. Technoblade would usually be awake after those fits, just thinking. He never bothered getting up- the kid liked Wilbur way more than Techno, and still didn't let him in. Technoblade understood. His dreams were rarely pleasant, but he had long trained himself to stop screaming out.

But, the things he mentioned, half-finished sentences, that hung heavy, beginning to paint a picture Technoblade didn't quite like.

"Fuck yeah, I'm better at fighting," Tommy said, "I trained with you, but I'm just good at that shit. I learned a lot fast. I was good at that shit, especially after the first wa-``Tommy coughed loudly like that could distract Technoblade from what he thought he heard "After the first wanker tried to fight me over my shit! I learned to fight before you even trained me. I hate when people take my shit, it's my stuff you know? Ender, people need to learn fucking boundaries."

“Tommy who was taking your stuff?” Technoblade asked, despite not wanting to ask about that at all. “Tubbo?”

“Nah,” Tommy said “It’s uh, some people you wouldn’t know. Not important who they are.”

“If you say so, kid,” Techno said, despite thinking that that may, in fact, be important. Not to mention the fact Tommy had cut himself off. Techno wasn’t sure he wanted to say wanker. It almost sounded like.. Something cool settled in Technoblade’s chest. But, it couldn’t be what he thought. This server was too safe. And Tommy probably did manage to get into a fight with one of the few other people that lived on the server sounded just like Tommy’s luck.

Tommy liked talking about dangerous things he’d done, like stupid MLG stunts, which apparently Tommy was *actually* good at. Technoblade had nearly had a heart attack when Tommy felt the need to prove it to all of them. But, the kid had managed to catch himself with relative ease using the water bucket.

Tubbo thought it was cool and Tommy had spent the next few hours alternatively showing off and teaching Tubbo some of his tricks. Phil had ultimately gone back inside, once he deemed them safe enough. Technoblade had watched for a while, but Wilbur kept glaring at him from across the clearing, where Tommy had built his cobblestone tower to practice jumping off of.

So Technoblade had retreated to his room. Later he’d glanced out and Wilbur had joined in, trying to show off.

Unfortunately, Tommy was ultimately better, and Wilbur caught some grief for his near falls. Technoblade was certain that the two extra years of practice had something to do with it and a small part of his did get a kick out of Wilbur’s frustration.

And he opened up a few more stories, telling Technoblade about MLGs he did, or how he and a friend (probably Tubbo) set a building on fire once. It sounded like. Normal things that Tommy would do, even it was annoying. Maybe that’s why people still beat him up. Tommy always was good at getting beat up.

But Tommy said things, still, that just didn't add up. Talking of a full enchanted netherite armour set, enchanted swords, too many magic things. There simply wasn't enough magic of enough lapis on the server to support that.

Had Tommy left the server? It went in his book. Technoblade hoped he was wrong. The implications had something tighten uncomfortably in his chest. But, Tommy was just a kid. A kid who had an accident and ended up in the past.

Tommy was just... Dramatic. The kid always had a flair for the dramatics, probably learned from Wilbur. But unlike Wilbur, who was more theatrical in his dramatics, Tommy was always full of emotion- anger, joy, whatever- he just shouted about it.

That had to be it.

Even if the notebook on the desk beside Technoblade's bed was filled with a neat list of facts that all pointed towards something more than a slightly chaotic future. Technoblade sighed as he closed it for the evening. Tommy had mentioned, in passing, the Phil 'didn't even think of him as a son anyway', which was concerning and Techno had noted that too. It was strange, these things that Tommy said, that simply didn't make sense.

And Technoblade had had enough. He'd been patient with Tommy, but he was almost done. He wouldn't tell Phil, but it was time to put more leverage on the kid. Starting tomorrow Technoblade would get his answers.

Tommy's entire body ached, as he crawled into bed. Technoblade's training was brutal, and he'd forgotten just how bad it could be, and he was certain that this was a nicer regime than what he'd gone through in exile. But, this body wasn't used to it like he had been in the future.

And, he was doing a halfway decent job of keeping things under wraps. He was pretty sure Technoblade was still a little suspicious of the timeline thing, but Tommy was doing a pretty good job of keeping him off his game. Wilbur had helped him put the window in and even if he was being a little bitch about Technoblade and generally annoying, Tommy was optimistic.

He hadn't seen Wilbur so... normal, in a long time. Maybe, just maybe, if he could keep Techno off his back, and get him and Wilbur to fight their shit out, then maybe they would never have to go to the SMP. Maybe things would be different.

Tommy could hope.

The sun was streaming through his newly installed window when Tommy woke up. It was nice, having a real window again, he thought, as he got out of bed, Instead of a fucking cave of a room.

It was a bit strange though, that they hadn't woken him up yet. It was strange he wasn't already awake, with the sunlight. That's usually what woke him up and he'd been struggling to regulate, without the sunrise to wake him up. These days Wilbur had been shaking him awake, or occasionally Phil knocking on his door to get him up at a reasonable hour. Or Tommy found himself slipping out, only to look outside and find it still dark, where he would sit on his bed until he heard other family members beginning to stir.

But, today it appeared... almost noon, based on the sun, as Tommy got out of bed. Weird.

The house seemed... quiet too, like everyone was still fucking sleeping. Or, as if the house was empty. Maybe it was. Tommy couldn't help the unease that pooled in his gut, though, there was no real reason to feel that way. He was turning into a paranoid bastard, wasn't he?

Still, Tommy played it safe, as he stepped over the creaky floorboards in his room, pulling his door open softly. There was nothing immediately wrong when he peeked out into the hallway, but Tommy couldn't help but feel off. The unease only grew as he crept into the hallway, and noticed Technoblade's door was standing slightly open. Technoblade's door was never open.

But, maybe he'd forgotten to shut it, or perhaps Phil had left something in there and forgotten to shut the door. That was probably it. Fucking paranoia. Tommy swallowed hard as he walked quietly toward the steps. Everything seemed fine until he got to the bottom of the staircase and froze.

Sprawled on the floor, in a pool of his own blood, was Philza.

Tommy made a noise of horror, before slapping a hand over his mouth as his stomach turned. Phil's bright blue eyes were open wide, face frozen somewhere between rage and pain. Tommy couldn't tear his eyes away, as much as he wanted to. He was frozen in horror, staring into Phil's ashen face. Tommy managed to tear his eyes away from his face, only to be met with the sight of dark black wings spread out wide, the right one bent strangely, like it had been folded in half, and soaked in blood. Worse, was the left wing, torn clean off, raw sinew, muscle, and bone, jutting from the appendage, still dripping dark blood. It was laying just past Phil's body and it looked shattered and bent like someone had taken their hands and crumbed it like paper.

One arm was thrown off to the side, and Phil's sword was just beyond his bloody fingertips, shattered into three pieces. The other arm was bent at a strange angle and a white bone protruded sharply from the wrist like it had been snapped. A sharp contrast from the blood that seemed to coat every inch of the floor and Phil's body.

The worst though was the gaping wound in Phil's stomach. A glowing trident, obviously enchanted, was dug straight through, buried to the hilt, pinning Phil to the floor. It looked like he'd been stabbed over and over, from the gaping wounds spilling blood and wooden splinters poking from them.

Tommy heaved, as his body finally allowed him to move. He stumbled toward the kitchen, only to trip over something on the ground. He hit hard, unable to attempt to catch himself. He rolled onto his stomach, as he tried to get up, only to be met with the sight of Tubbo's unseeing green eyes. His face was a mask of horror, and Tommy let out something between a sob and a scream. A single arrow protruded from his chest, buried up to the fletching like he'd be shot point-blank. It didn't even look like Tubbo had fought back, simply like he'd been killed without hesitation.

Tommy wanted to throw up, but couldn't. He heaved but nothing came up, Tommy scrambled back, hands slipping on the bloody floor. Tubbo was dead. Philza was dead. And not just dead, torn apart. Tommy had seen war, he'd seen death, he'd seen Wilbur die, but that wasn't here. This was home. This was horrible. It was fucked, so fucked. What happened? What was happening?

He scrambled back to his feet, shaking his head. He had to be asleep. This-this wasn't real. "No." he muttered "no, no no, this can't be-"

"Really?" Tommy spun around, to find Dream standing in the door of his kitchen, white smiley mask staring straight ahead. It was splattered in blood, just like the green hoodie. And for a moment the world stopped. No. dream couldn't fucking be here. Ream couldn't be here. Dream- Dream had done this, Somehow he'd found him, across time, and he'd done this. Tommy's hands shook as he reached for his sword, only to pull out his nearly useless wooden training sword. "Oh, Tommy, it's absolutely real."

Tommy shook his head "No. No! I-You can't be here! You shouldn't even know about this place. How the fuck-"

"Did you really think you could escape me, Tommy?" Dream asked, voice laced with amusement. "C'mon, now. You know better than that."

"No, no, no, no" Tommy muttered. "Fuck off Dream, you aren't real. You can't be here. They can't be- "

"Dead?" Dream supplied, as Tommy choked on a sob. "They are. It was surprising, seeing how easily they all fell. Even Technoblade was almost too easy. I thought it would be more interesting, watching the lose all their lives." Dream glanced over his shoulder, out the window. The day outside was sunny. Bright. It was horrible. Tommy's knees nearly buckled as he found himself following Dream's gaze. The pristine white snow had been stained red, a sharp contrast that turned Tommy's stomach. Technoblade was just outside the large window, his coat torn down the middle, wearing no shoes, no armour, nothing, just sprawled in the snow lie he'd simply sprung out of bed to fight. A fight he'd lost terribly since his head laid nearly three feet from his body, half-buried in the snow, pink hair stained red from the blood.

Tommy couldn't even speak, couldn't move, as Dream prattled on, talking lightly, casually

"I mean, Tubbo fell so fast, it wasn't a fight, even if he did have all three lives, and Philza, he put up a fight, but once his wings went, it was over for him. And Wilbur-"

Dream recounted their deaths like it was nothing more than a vaguely interesting story. Like he hadn't slaughtered them. Like he hadn't found Tommy, and come, and taken everything from him again. Tommy launched himself at Dream, with a scream of rage.

They tumbled to the ground, and Tommy came out on top, staring down into Dream's stupid smiley face mask. Dream didn't even fight back, as Tommy pummeled his, just laughed, just laughed, and laughed. The wooden sword wasn't sharp enough to stab him, not really, but Tommy didn't care. He brought it down violently over and over again, into Dream's stomach and chest and face. A hit for Philza. A hit for Tubbo. A hit for Technoblade. And for Wilbur, whatever Dream had done to him. And for everything Dream had done, everything he would do. Blood coated his hand, coated the sword, splattering across Tommy's face. His arms burned, but he couldn't stop.

The laughing stopped, but Tommy couldn't. Not when he had Dream down, not when he could mask him pay. He couldn't stop, as he brought the sword down, his fists down, on every inch of skin he could find. He finally paused when Dream's breathing became labored, and, with shaking hands, pulled the cracked mask away from Dream's face.

"I want to watch you die, you bastard". Tommy snarled, ripped the mask away. He wanted to see the face of the man who'd ruined his life. The mask fell apart in his hands, the porcelain cracked beyond reason. It slipped from Tommy's hands as he froze, staring down into the face beneath him.

No. Tommy recoiled in horror, dripping the blood sword as he fell back onto the floor. It was Wilbur. Wilbur's face was there, broken, and bloody, relapsing for breath.

"Why?" Wilbur rasped, staring into Tommy, with scarily clear eyes, "Tommy, why did you do this?"

"What?" Tommy whispered, "Wilbur, I-"

"You killed us." Wilbur whispered, raising a shaky hand as he pointed a bloody finger at Tommy, "You killed us all. Why, Tommy? Why did you do it?"

*"I didn't," Tommy said, backing away from Wilbur, hands slipping on the bloody floor
"Wilbur I didn't. Dream-"*

"Phil tried to stop you," Wilbur said, like he couldn't even hear Tommy, "But you killed him. And then Tubbo. Then you slaughtered Technoblade. You laughed Tommy. Why did you kill us? Why did you laugh?"

"I-no, this isn't real. I didn't kill you I-I can't-" Tommy shook his head, unable to look away from the betrayal in Wilbur's face, as it morphed into rage.

"You're a monster, Tommy. You destroyed us. You ruined everything. You always ruined everything. You ruined this family. You killed us." Wilbur spat, angry. "You did this, Tommy, look at what you've done."

Tommy choked on a sob "I didn't. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to. I'm sorry, please-"

"I hate you, Tommy. You're a disappointment. I hate you. Look at what you've done. This is your fault. This is your fault, Tommy." Wilbur glared at him, as the light faded from his eyes, and his expression slowly went blank.

"I'm sorry," Tommy pleaded "I didn't fucking- please. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to. I didn't- I'm sorry. Please."

"Doesn't it feel good, Tommy?" his head snapped up, to find Dream standing in the kitchen again, this time with a pristine mask and hoodie "You freed yourself of your attachments. Of all the people dragging you down. "

"No," Tommy spat, "No, fuck you, I wouldn't, I couldn't. You did this!"

Dream crossed the kitchen to crouch by Tommy. "Oh Tommy, this was all you. You're the one covered in blood, aren't you? "

And he was. Tommy was covered in blood, dripping from his hands, from his hair on his face, every shaking limb coated in the blood. "No, no, no-"

"Yes, Tommy." Dream said, gripping Tommy's shoulder tightly, "You cleared yourself from this. You're free. It feels good, doesn't it? They didn't care anyway, now like I did. They wanted to hold you back Tommy. They didn't care about you. I do. I can show you how to be a god, Tommy. That was the first step. Now it' can be you and me, just like old times!"

Tommy could hear the smile behind the mask and wanted nothing more than to rip it off, but he couldn't move, not as hot tears streaked down his face. "You're not my friend. Fuck off. Fuck off, fuck off, fuck off, this isn't real. fuck off. No this isn't real. This isn't real."

"It's real, Tommy. It's just you and me now. Tommy and his only friend. I'm the only one who cares. I'm going to show you how to be just like me."

"No, please, no." Tommy begged, hating the way his voice shook "I don't want to be like you, you bastard. Please don't, please just go, I don't want to go, please."

Dream reached out and grabbed him, pulling him up to his feet, like he weighed nothing. Tommy struggled, hitting and scratching but nothing worked. Drea just laughed at him, cool and eerie and Tommy couldn't escape it, even as he pressed his hand to his ears, echoing in his head before everything went dark.

Wilbur was concerned, when he woke up to Tommy screaming, but didn't even bother getting out of bed, at first. Tommy had nightmares almost every night, or every other night and Wilbur had first started getting up. The first few nights after Tommy had woken up sobbing or screaming, Tommy had let him in, had clung to Wilbur like a life-line as he cried, which was certainly concerning. He refused to talk about what he dreamed about and swore Wilbur to secrecy, but Wilbur was glad to let him hold on if it brought comfort, even if he desperately wanted to know what was happening on Tommy's head.

But, then Tommy had started pretending to be asleep. Ignoring Wilbur's knocks. His sobs would cut off abruptly like Tommy was waking himself up. Tommy no longer let Wilbur in, and claimed every morning that he slept fine. Wilbur didn't like it, but he'd stopped getting up. Tommy wasn't going to let him in, and at any moment, he'd probably stop screaming and they could all go back to sleep.

Except- Tommy didn't stop sobbing- instead he started screaming.

Wilbur was out of bed in an instant, shoving his glasses on his face, as he stumbled out of his room to Tommy's door. He didn't bother knocking, just grabbing the door handle and twisting only to find it- "locked? Fucking hell." Wilbur muttered, "when did he start locking his shit."

"Tommy!" He called, not really caring who he woke up "Toms, wake up!"

That did nothing- Tommy was still screaming. Through the wooden door, Wilbur could hear what sounded like him just screaming 'no' over and over again.

Wilbur knew, intellectually, that Tommy was safe. There was nothing in the walls of the house that could hurt him, but Wilbur couldn't help the way his heart kept into his throat. Tommy was hurting, even if it wasn't physically, and Wilbur was fucking helpless against it. Except, shit, they'd just put the window back in, hadn't they? Tommy had been begging for days to get his window back and Wilbur had finally gotten the stuff for it. He hadn't bothered to tell Phil or Technoblade, but he, Tommy, and Tubbo had put it in only hours ago. If Tommy freaked out... Wilbur wasn't sure they would catch him, this time.

Wilbur threw his shoulder against the door, but it was solid oak and didn't budge. "Tommy," he called again, pounding his hand on the door. "You need to wake up."

The door creaked open behind him, and Wilbur turned around to see Technoblade, wearing nothing but a loose pair of pajama pants and a long sleeve shirt, sword dangling from his hand. His hair was wild, pink strands dangling in front of his face "What's wrong." He demanded, eyes searching the room for threats, before finally settling on Wilbur.

“Tommy’s screaming, and fucking locked his door,” Wilbur said, “I think it’s a nightmare but-“

“Move,” Technoblade said flatly, dropping his sword into his inventory. Wilbur, under different circumstances, might’ve argued, but he stepped to the side. Technoblade squared up to the door and with a swift kick, the frame splintered and the door popped open. Wilbur was hot on Technoblade’s heels as they rushed into the room.

Tommy was on the floor, looking like he’d thrown himself off the bed, and was back into a corner. His knees were pressed against his chest, curling in on himself, his hands were digging into his hair, as he rocked slightly. His screams had quieted, now he was just babbling incoherently. He could hear footsteps coming up the stairs, two at a time. Phil. Wilbur didn’t bother to wait for him.

“No, no no. No this isn’t real.” Tommy’s eyes were squeezed shut tightly and Wilbur wasn’t sure if he was awake or not, muttering under his breath, talking to someone Wilbur couldn’t see. His heart leaped into his throat. Fuck, he thought they were past this.

Wilbur pushed past Technoblade, who was standing just in the doorway, expression unreadable, and was at Tommy’s side in an instant kneeling. “Toms, you need to wake up. Tommy-” Wilbur reached out- he needed to shake Tommy awake. Needed to snap him out of this.

“Wait, Wilbur don’t touch-” It was too late. The second Wilbur put his hand on Tommy’s shoulder, Tommy’s head snapped up. His eyes flew open, but they were wild and unseeing. Tommy let out a noise that Wilbur wasn’t sure he’d ever heard a human make, and shoved Wilbur hard enough that Wilbur toppled to the ground, head slamming against the floor painfully. Tommy lunged like he might attack someone, eyes desperate. Wilbur flinched, prepared for Tommy to land on top of him but it never came. Technoblade had Tommy from behind, wrapped in a bear hug, unyielding, even as Tommy fought desperately against him.

Tommy was talking nonsense now, eyes darting around the room wildly “I didn’t mean to, please don’t. I don’t want to go with you, you, I can’t go back to the-” Techno slapped a hand over Tommy’s mouth, with a look of vague panic. He managed to keep his hold on Tommy, despite the shift in position and the ferocity with which Tommy was fighting him.

“Techno, let him go. You’re hurting him!” Wilbur snapped, gaping in horror. How was that helping Tommy? Tommy’s eyes were wild with absolute panic. “You’re making it worse!”

“He’s having night terror or somethin’ If I don’t restrain him, he’s gonna hurt himself or someone else.” Techno snapped “If we hadn’t touched him it might not have come to this, But you and Phil need to get outta here, in case he” Technoblade grunted as Tommy’s head slammed into his face. “In case I can’t hold onto him.”

Technoblade looked over at Phil with an expression that Wilbur couldn’t quite read. Something passed between them and his dad nodded minutely.

Wilbur’s face darkened. What was that about? What weren’t they telling him? “No, Techno he needs-”

“Wil come on.” Phil cut in, finally dragging his eyes down to Wilbur, “Techno has this under control, alright? There’s nothin’ we can do, mate. Nothing but wait until he wakes up.”

Of course, Phil would say that. Of course. Whatever Technoblade thought, went. Wilbur clenched his fists but got to his feet. He stalked past Phil, and into his own room, where he slammed the door shut. He heard Phil’s footsteps shuffled closer, then down the stairs. He could still make out Tommy’s sobbing, and the quiet rumble of Technoblade’s voice. Wilbur buried his face in his hands. Useless. He felt absolutely useless.

Technoblade lowered himself to the floor carefully, trying to keep Tommy’s gangly limbs from tangling as he lowered them down Tommy’s fight was already leaving him, as he started to go limp in his grip. Technoblade glazed down and saw Tommy’s eyes slowly sliding shut as he cried against Technoblade’s chest. He hadn’t been sure what Tommy was going to say- wasn’t sure if he was going to talk about fucking time-travel, so he’d done the only thing he could think to do- cover his mouth.

It hadn’t been the smartest move- Techno had the bite marks to prove it, but he wasn’t sure how else to stop Tommy from talking. Even if he wasn’t sure why he had stopped Tommy

from talking. It would have been much easier, and not technically Technoblade's fault if Tommy had told them himself but, apparently, he'd gone soft. He couldn't bring himself to let the kid spill the beans when he was so obviously afraid to under good circumstances.

He blamed Chat and their apparent attachment to Tommy.

"It's okay Tommy," Technoblade said quietly, wishing that he could pass Tommy off to Wilbur. "You're safe here kid."

Tommy was no longer sobbing so harshly and had almost entirely stopped fighting.

"Wish I knew what's going on in your head right now." Technoblade grumbled, "It's made all of this a hell of a lot easier."

Tommy seemed to react to his voice, whining quietly as he thrashed again, though it was half-hearted at best. "Hey, kid, it's alright. You're not there, wherever you think you are."

Tommy shuddered again, face still scrunched up. His eyes cracked open, still confused, but they finally locked on Tehcnoblade, and something like recognition sparked in his eyes. "Technoblade," He muttered "Don't- don't tell him I'm here. Don't let him take me. Please, don't tell him I'm here. I'll fucking die first. "

"I won't kid," Technoblade assured him quietly, despite the ice in his veins. Chat was screaming for blood, pounding in his head, blood for whatever had caused this to happen. "You're alright kid. Just go to sleep."

Technosoft?

Aww, Technoblade cares

AngstInnit

Blood

Make them pay

Who hurt him

Brother pog

Technosoft.

Blood

Blood

Find who did this and kill them

“Chat, shut up.” Technoblade murmured. They weren’t helping him at all, not when he needed to be the opposite of bloodthirsty. Also, he wasn't *soft* .

Tommy swallowed hard as his eyes went unfocused, and slowly slid shut, still shuddering against Technoblade’s chest.

Technoblade hesitantly moved his hand to Tommy’s back and rubbed small circles on it, as Tommy shuddered quietly, still half-trapped between sleep and whatever nightmare was in his head.

Technoblade had underestimated the fear Tommy had expressed. He thought Phil was exaggerating, about how terrible Tommy had been, those first few nights. If anything, Phil had understated how bad it was, if this was any indication. No wonder Philza thought Tommy was going out of his head.

“What happened in the future, kid?” he whispered quietly as Tommy’s breathing slowly evened out.

Chapter End Notes

1. Uh yeah I don't know how I feel about this chapter. It feels a little disjointed to me, but I like each individual part of it, so I don't know. I've had the dream scene written

for... a hot minutes, so I'm pretty excited to share this with you guys. I'm not happy with this chapter totally but I think it turned out as well as it could. Also, I'm sorry for the time skip, I just didn't want to write the exact same scene of Tommy and Technoblade talking over and over again. I have some scenes I cut because they were.. just the same thing lol.

2. The next chapter is going to be just as long as this one, if not longer. this one hit just at 6k, and the next one is less than halfway written and is already at 3k. Might break it up, but I'm not sure.

3. If you skipped the italics and want a brief description of what his dream was, just ask me in the comments and I'll provide it!

4. Also, idk if I've said this before but every chapter title is from a song on the playlist I made when I started writing this lol. I kinda hate the songs now but I Cannot stop listening to them.

5. Yeah that's it. I don't have much to say, but ya'll rock. Some people say they write for themselves, and this is absolutely self indulgent but I'm an attention whore who thrives on validation at the same time. Hope ya'll have a good day!

don't need no permission

Chapter Summary

Wilbur gets some things off his chest

Chapter Notes

This one is almost entirely Wilbur. Tommy will be the focus of the next one.

This is all angst, please enjoy.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Hey,” Wilbur, who had finally moved back to sit on his bed, startled as his door was pushed open, and Technoblade started talking “Kid’s back to a real sleep. Finally calmed down. Thought you might want to know”

Technoblade had long stretches down his arms, a faint bruise on his chin, and there were bags under his eyes. More concerning, however, was the blood on his shirt. “Is he okay? Why the fuck is their blood on your shirt?” Wilbur hissed, keeping his voice low so that he didn’t wake Tommy, or get Phil’s attention.

Technoblade looked down like he hadn’t even realized someone had been bleeding, which, *typical* . Had Tommy hurt himself? Had- “Little gremlin bit me.” Technoblade said gruffly holding up his hand, which indeed had a bite mark on it, deep enough to break skin in a couple of places. “I didn’t hurt the kid, if that’s what you’re implying.”

Wilbur clenched his jaw. As he got to his feet. He needed to check on Tommy, see that he really was sleeping, just to soothe the gnawing worry in his chest.. “It looked like you were.”

Technoblade scoffed. “Wil, I was tryin’ to protect him from himself. And you, I guess. He wasn’t himself in there.”

Wilbur pushed past Technoblade, and as he did, he muttered “yeah, and how would you know what Tommy is like?” he didn't really care if Techno heard it or not, and was ready for a glare or snarky reply, but he didn't care. He was going to check on Tommy

He wasn't ready for Technoblade's hand to grab his shoulder and turn him around, nearly pulling Wilbur off his feet. “What? Got a problem?” Wilbur snapped, glaring at Technoblade, who was still an inch or so shorter than Wilbur.

“Yes.” Technoblade said quietly “You, apparently. I grew up with Tommy too, Wilbur, You're just being a jackass.”

Wilbur rolled his eyes. Normally, that might've been the end of it. Wilbur might've just stomped off, but he was exhausted and stressed and tired of this shit. “But he isn't your brother, is he, Technoblade?” Wilbur managed to keep his voice down but didn't try to hide the acid in his tone “That's what you said. Phil isn't your dad, I'm not your brother, so Tommy isn't either.”

Technoblade's eyes narrowed, and Wilbur could see the set in his jaw that meant an argument was coming. Good. Wilbur could win an argument.

“And just because he wants you to train him, or because he suddenly has night terrors, that doesn't mean you know him, Technoblade. I'm still the one that was always here. Tommy *is* my brother.” Wilbur spat the words as loudly as he dared, wrenching his shoulder from Technoblade's grip. “Just because he thinks you're cool now, doesn't mean anything. Eventually, you'll leave again, just like always.”

Technoblade crossed his arms, and was silent for a moment before some emotion Wilbur couldn't quite read flashed across his face “You're jealous.” It wasn't a question, just a statement, delivered flat and in Techno's cool monotone.

Wilbur took a step back like he'd been slapped. “I am not.” He snapped, then winced at how loud that sounded in the quiet house “I am not jealous.” he repeated more quietly.

“No, you are.” Technoblade said “That’s always been your problem, Wilbur. I haven’t forgotten our fight when I was sixteen, you know. I mighta left, but you’re the one who told me not to bother coming back.”

Wilbur’s mouth twisted down. That was one of the worst nights of his life. He could still remember how they’d screamed at each other. “And that was after you said you were glad that you weren’t actually related to any of us- that I shouldn’t call you my twin anymore because you weren’t ever really my brother. I don’t regret it. ”

That was true he didn’t regret any of it. ~~He didn’t feel guilty about it, late at night, when he missed the way things had been when they were young.~~ Technoblade didn’t care- hadn’t cared that night, or for years before that. He didn’t care about Tommy and not about Wilbur. Maybe if he just pissed him off enough Technoblade would leave.

A muscle jumped in Technoblade’s jaw and he let out a low chuckle “Yeah, okay, I did that. But you’d already made it clear I was nothin’ but a burden on this family. I guess that doesn’t matter now, though, I’m over that. You aren’t though. The kid’s hurtin’ Wilbur and I’m helpin’ him, or at least tryin’.”

“What, by keeping secrets from the brother that actually cares about him or by training him to be a killer like you.?” Wilbur hissed, “You only care because something is going on that I don’t know about- I know you are keeping me out of the loop- and because he might be useful.”

Technoblade’s eyes glinted dangerously in the dim light and he suddenly seemed more imposing, more dangerous than he had the entire time he’d been home. “You just can’t stand the idea of him payin’ anyone but your attention. Tommy is almost an adult, and you know what, he could be a great fighter if he wants to be. And I’m tryin to help him.” Technoblade “Maybe I’ll take him with me when I do leave. I guess he is tellin; me his secrets after all”

Wilbur’s stomach twisted as he froze at the implications of Techno’s words. He’d lost Technoblade to pride and blood. Was he losing Tommy to that same path? Wilbur couldn’t help but remember the sound of Techno’s own screams, and all the times Phil had restrained Techno the way Techno had restrained Tommy. He’d lost Tommy too, hadn’t he? Tommy didn’t want to stay here forever. Wilbur already knew that, Tommy had said it.

Technoblade closed his eyes for a moment, suddenly deflated. “Wilbur, you need to get your head on straight. I’m not- you know what. I’m too tired for this. Believe whatever you want, I’m not doin’ this with you right now.” He pushed past Wilbur and went back into his own room. Wilbur simply stood in the hallway a long time, wishing he could summon the energy to cry. Eventually, he just went back to his own room, leaving Tommy’s bust door closed.

In the morning, Wilbur ran into Phil in the storage room. Tommy was probably still sleeping since his door was pulled shut, and Wilbur didn’t really give a shit about what Technoblade was doing. Really. He didn’t.

He hadn’t been looking for his dad. In fact, he was actually pretty much trying to avoid him, since he was still fuming from his fight with Technoblade and didn’t really want to hear whatever excuses that Phil would make about the night before, but nonetheless, it was too late to turn back by the time Wilbur realized that Phil was down in the storage room.

“Hello Wilbur.” his dad said hesitantly, still standing over an open chest as Wilbur dropped from the ladder onto the floor “How’s the shoulder this morning?”

Wilbur was still pissed, but he’d calmed down a little after he’d gotten up and realized he might have overreacted the night before. He was still beyond worried about Tommy, and still wished tEchno would just leave them alone, but he was fine. At least fine enough to make small talk.. “It’s fine. A little stiff, but pretty much healed. Has been for a few days.”

“Ah, that’s good.” There was a beat of silence as they stared at one another, silence awkward. Wilbur’s jaw was clenched, biting back the words that burned desperately in the back of his throat. None of this was good. Nothing was good in the house anymore. “Can I help you look for something?”

“No,” Wilbur said shortly, swallowing down the venomous words he was thinking. Shouting would get nowhere. It’d probably only spend Phil off into the skies, for Ender knows how long. “I’m just getting a couple of things of wool to make a new coat. I know where that is.”

“Ah, alright mate”

Wilbur tried to ignore Phil’s eyes on him as he headed to the chest on the other side of the room where they kept the wool. Tommy seemed to get taller every day, and his coat was getting short in the sleeves. He’d noticed it before... well, before everything, but it had slipped his mind until the snowball fight a few days ago. The sleeves were too short and Tommy probably hadn’t even noticed. Wilbur could make a new one, though. Maybe red, he considered, studying the wool options.

He gathered enough for what he needed, as well as some regular cloth, then closed the chest. Phil was still digging through the same chest- it was full of random stuff. Probably sorting it, after Tommy dumped crap in there like he always did. Wilbur climbed up the ladder, ignoring the feeling of his father’s eyes on his back as he hoisted himself out of the storage space.

Wilbur had the material spread out on the floor of the crafting room, just off the main room, when he realized he hadn’t grabbed any metal to make the buttons. “Damn it,” he muttered as he got back up. He had just gotten settled.

Wilbur went back down the ladder, hoping that even though he hadn’t heard his dad leave, the room would be empty. At first, he thought Phil *had* snuck past him, since he couldn’t see him in the stacks of chests, but then Wilbur heard the telltale hum of an enderchest.

Phil was in his enderchest.

Wilbur liked to think himself a smart, rational man. He knew lots of things and had studied hard for years. Wilbur hadn’t been nearly as many places as Phil, or Technoblade, but he had levied with Tommy for years. He had patience. But, he had a temper. And it was flared.

Wilbur stormed past the main set of chests, into the very furthest corner of the room, hidden by a small cobblestone wall, where Phil kept his enderchest. And, there Phil was, rifling through it, supplied laid out on both sides of him, carefully considering each item. His vision went red as he took in the scene in front of him.

“Are you kidding me?” Wilbur snapped, coming to a halt just behind his dad, who jumped up, turning to face Wilbur. The guilt that flashed across his face for a split second was all the confirmation that Wilbur needed, for his fuse to burn out completely.

“Wil-

“You’re leaving? You’re seriously going to leave? Now?” Wilbur practically shouted, disbelief coloring his tone. Was his dad fucking serious? Shit was falling apart and he was going to leave? “I-I can’t believe it!”

“Wilbur, I’m not leaving right now, I’m just going through all my supplies-”

“Don’t bullshit me, you only ever look in your enderchest when you’re planning a trip. And you never wait long to leave once you start planning. You’re going to leave when Technoblade does, aren’t you? Finally go off with your favorite son, for good this time? Leave behind the two useless ones, now that we aren’t in danger of dying?” Wilbur didn’t know when Technoblade was leaving, but he was sure it was soon. Techno probably couldn’t stand being in one place for so long, at least without being violent. He had to be at his wit’s end with Tommy and would leave them again too. And Wilbur was ready for it, but Tommy probably wasn’t, especially not after everything that had happened- after what happened the night before?

His dad’s face darkened, and he held up his hands like Wilbur was some sort of wild animal that needed to be tamed. Wilbur wasn’t the crazy one here. “That isn’t true, Wilbur, and you know it.”

“Isn’t it, though?” Wilbur spat “It’s always been you and Techno, off to see the world! Two peas in a pod, while I stayed back and kept myself and Tommy alive. Always you waiting on his letters or his messages. Always stories about your travels. Never about us. So, I figured it was only a matter of time until you packed up and went to him for good. I guess I just expected you to at least wait a little while longer.”

“Wilbur that’s not fair.” Phil snapped. “I don’t have a fucking favorite-”

“Oh please.” Wilbur snapped “Not a favorite? Really? REally? Why did you always leave me behind then?”

“You always fucking offered to stay here.” Phil snapped back, his wings twitching outward with frustration. “What was I supposed to think?”

“Yeah,” Wilbur said, venom dripping from his tone. He couldn’t believe that Phil had the audacity to suggest that Wilbur hadn’t ever wanted to leave “Because after the first three times being told no, I got the message that I wasn’t welcome. Sure, maybe I wasn’t ready, but then it didn’t matter. Someone had to take care of Tommy. If I went, he’d be on his own. Then Tubbo came around and they both needed someone who wasn’t going to leave for weeks or months at a time!”

Now that the words were pouring out, Wilbur couldn’t stop them. He’d thought about this one too many times, and after the night before- after what Technboalde had said- he didn’t even want to stop. It felt good “You think I wanted to stay in this house forever? Reading the same fucking books, playing the same fucking songs? I wanted to see the world too, and I couldn’t! I’ve been stuck here, playing babysitter because you only wanted kids when it was convenient! When you got bored of playing war with your favorite son, who doesn’t even acknowledge his family!”

“That isn’t true Wilbur!” Phil snapped back, interrupting him “I’d do anything for you, Tommy, and Tubbo.”

“Yeah, anything except be around when we need you.” Wilbur shouted back, gesturing wildly “How many birthdays have you actually been here for, of Tommy’s? What, four? Maybe five? Always off on a trip. I’m the one who pulled Tommy’s first tooth! There’s a reason he stopped going to you for nightmares, Phil.”

Wilbur ran a hand through his hair “Why did you stop taking me on trips when I was a kid? You’ve taken me and Tommy, what, a few places? Only on a few trading trips, and even then, those were rare. You didn’t care! We weren’t the perfect little soldier Technoblade was! We weren’t *interesting* enough.”

“Wil- “ Phil was trying to cut in, his own voice rising but Wilbur wasn’t done. He would get to talk this time. His dad was going to listen.

“And to say I never wanted to. Never wanted to- Ha! didn’t have a choice! You left me alone for weeks on end- I was fine, but I couldn’t leave Tommy and Tubbo. I had to be the adult, while you were off with your favorite son or on your own adventures. I’m an adult Phil. I don’t want to live on this server the rest of my life! But, I had to be an adult here, too, and hell, two months ago I even got an offer to leave. To explore! And I couldn’t take it, I couldn’t take it, because who knew if you were going to be around for Tommy.” Wilbur had begun pacing in front of Phil, unable to stand still, as the rage burned in his chest.

Wilbur laughed bitterly. “And now, now, Tommy doesn’t even need me. He doesn’t even care. Guess I’m not interesting enough for him anymore, now that Technoblade is back. And now you’re actually paying him attention. Guess all you need to do is go crazy, to finally get the attention of the great Philza, Angel of Death.”

Phil flinched at that and Wilbur felt vindictive pleasure, knowing that blow cut deep, just like it was supposed to “That’s not what’s happening here, Wilbur and you know it.” Phil snapped “Get off your fucking high horse-”

“My high horse?” Wilbur said, “Seriously? Phil, it’s always been, watch out for Tommy, be safe here, wait for Technoblade and I to be back. I practically raised Tommy, Phil, when you couldn’t be bothered to, and you still treat me like a fucking child. And now, I get to watch my youngest brother go just as crazy as Technoblade did, and learn to hate me just as much. And I think you’re the one, that doesn’t understand, Philza. I understand perfectly. We’re only useful to you when we can be just like you. If not, then what does it matter? I’ve known where I stood for years now. I was just trying to protect Tommy from that, but I guess he doesn’t need me to do that anymore, huh?”

“Just fucking go, Wilbur.” Phil finally snapped, shouting back at Wilbur “I’m not stopping you. If you really believe all this shit, and want to leave so badly then why don’t you?”

Wilbur was taken aback for a split second, That was all he’d ever wanted, right? To get to go? Now he had permission, even if Phil was pissed about it. He didn’t want Phil’s permission, but it made a clear enough statement. “Fine!” he shouted, “I will!”

Wilbur stormed away from his dad and up into the main house, his heart still pounding in rage. Phil didn't care. He didn't even see it. Of course not. He never had. Nothing would change that. Why had he even bothered?

He took the steps two at a time and barged into his room. He didn't bother to pack much into his bag, just some clothes, his handful of emergency potions, his guitar was strapped to his back. He stuck his sword in his inventory, and a few random food items he grabbed on the way out of the kitchen. His emergency communicator rattled at the bottom of his bag and Wilbur slammed the door behind him.

Phil hadn't even tried to stop him. Good. He wouldn't have stopped.

A few hours later, Wilbur was standing on the road between servers, communicator in hand. Messages usually sent, from the in-between places to any server without issue. If he sent it now, he could start on the right path. The address Sally had given him months ago was typed in the address bar, glowing softly in the twilight of the inter-server pathways.

In the body of the message, he'd types what probably wasn't his most eloquent words, but were honest ones:

"Does the offer still stand? I'm done with that fucking place. I'm ready for something more-Wilbur"

He hesitated, finger over the send button, and glanced behind him at the portal shimmering in the distance. He shook his head. Tommy would be fine and Tubbo, well, even if Tommy was going crazy, Tubbo was still his best friend. Tommy would never leave him behind. Even if Techno and Phil left, they'd have each other.

Besides, it's not like they needed him these days anyway. They were nearly adults. They were old enough. Wilbur was free. He hit the send button and pulled his bag closer. Wilbur squared his shoulders and stared out in front of him. It was his turn now, for adventure. Wilbur wasn't useless. He deserved this. He'd show them. All of them. WilburSoot wasn't useless. He wasn't a no one. Wilbur would make a name for himself, despite what Phil and Technoblade thought of him.

Phil flinched as the door above him slammed. Wilbur really was pissed off. He wasn't worried though.

No, mostly he was just angry. "Dramatic bastard," he muttered "Fuckng shouting about things that don't even make sense."

What had Wilbur even been talking about, spewing shit about being a babysitter? Of course, he hadn't taken Wilbur on the more dangerous trips when Technoblade was young. Technoblade.. was different. He could fight as well as grown men from a young age. Wilbur hated sword fighting. He hated armour. He especially hated practice.

Wilbur was better at it now, but especially when the boys were young, Phil couldn't keep an eye on Technoblade and protect Wilbur, not if they ended up in a scrape. And then Tommy came along and Phil certainly couldn't afford to take both of them, not when Tommy was likely to run straight into trouble.

Technoblade had needed him- as voices got worse, as Phil searched for answers he never found, as he helped train his eldest son so that he could at least control his penchant for violence, Wilbur had been fine. Safe. With Tommy and Tubbo, and Phil couldn't help that he seemed more than happy to stay at home with Tommy. Wilbur was smart- smarter than Technoblade gave his twin credit for, though, and had a silver tongue that could charm someone into buying ice in the winter. Silver tongues didn't do much good when someone was trying to cut it out, though. Phil knew that far too well.

Wilbur had never really seemed upset, not any more than he was always moody. But Phil always brought things home, let Wilbur play him new songs when they had time. Phil and Wilbur spent time together, telling stories and Phil would listen to Wilbur prattle on about god knows what.

"Bullshit," Phil muttered as he slammed his chest shut. He hadn't even been planning on leaving, not any time soon, since it seemed tEchnboalde was stuck here for the foreseeable future, with whatever the hell was happening with Tommy.

And maybe that was the problem. The two of them had once been extremely close but around the time Technoblade left for good, their relationship had gotten rocky. Phil had assumed it

had gotten better, not right, but time tended to mend childhood hurts and rebuild bridges. But maybe that wasn't the case.

Phil didn't know what exactly had brought on all that, but it was probably just Tommy's nightmare. Wil had been pissed the night before so Phil had given his space- he didn't want to start a fight when everyone needed sleep. That hadn't worked, though.

Phil heaved a sigh as his shoulders slumped and his wings drooped. Wilbur just needed some space. Some time to cool off. Phil needed it too before he said anything else he regretted. Already he felt a bit bad about what he'd shouted at Wilbur, even if his son had been talking nonsense.

Yeah, that would be fine. As soon as he finished sorting his enderchest shit, he'd go after Wilbur, who would probably already be on his way back in. It would give them time to blow off some steam and then they could talk about whatever crazy shit Wilbur had been spewing.

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Phil wasn't exactly sure how long he let himself get lost in the familiar and monotonous task of sorting his chest, counting and recounting things such as golden apples, rare potions, and totems.

But, as his hands did the familiar work, something akin to worry bubbled in Phil's chest. Wilbur had been extremely upset, even if it seemed a bit unwarranted. Wilbur never made good choices when he was upset. Phil knew that all too well about his son. Once, when he was fourteen, Wilbur had been angry with Phil for some reason and had dumped every single chest, mixing all the inventory together, worse than anything Tommy ever did and left it.

That was a mild example, though, and this had been a far worse fight. Unease had settled firmly in Phil's chest and as much as he tried to ignore it, he couldn't. Wilbur was probably going to fucking try and stay out all night, just to be a bitch. Phil had half a mind to let him, after all the shit he'd yelled, but in reality, Wilbur probably hadn't even taken a sword with him and Phil wouldn't just let him get himself killed. So Phil rose to his feet and let his mostly sorted enderchest fall shut.

He climbed up the ladder with practiced ease, kicking the trapdoor shut behind him. "Hello!" Tubbo called from one of the chairs, startling Phil, whose wings flared out in response "Have

you seen Tommy or Wilbur?”

Phil relaxed “Tubbo, you scared the shit out of me. Uh, Tommy’s off with Techno. Neither of them slept well, so they left early. Should be back soon. Wilbur is in a mood and stormed off earlier. I’m going to look for him. You know how he gets”

Tubbo frowned “Oh. Alright then. Can I come with you?”

Phil hesitated. Tubbo would slow him down, but really, Wilbur probably hadn’t gone far. Besides, Phil hadn’t seen much of Tubbo lately so he felt a bit bad leaving the kid here alone and maybe Wilbur would be a little more reasonable if Tubbo was around. “Why not. Just grab a coat.”

Tubbo brightened. “Cool! It’s a bit of an adventure, isn’t it?”

“I suppose, mate.” Phil said, “Wil’s probably just off moping in the woods.”

“Maybe.” Tubbo agreed as he pulled his coat on “Or maybe he ran away! Or got kidnapped by a fucking enderman.”

Phil shook his head in vague amusement as Tubbo headed for the door. The unease in his chest seemed to dissipate a bit, simply because Tubbo was just so... Tubbo “I doubt it”

“Alright, but if we have to fight off a hoard of endermen, just know I was right.” Tubbo said lightly “I think we’d win, even with all their teleporting and shit.”

Phil grinned and ruffled Tubbo’s hair. He sometimes forgot just how chaotic Tommy’s best friends could be. He was just as bad as Tommy, he was just not quite as loud as Tommy, or Wilbur. “Come on, let’s go find Wil before he freezes his ass off.”

Wilbur wasn't in any of his usual spots. He and Tubbo had started off joking around as they looked for Wilbur, but as they scoured all the normal spots Wilbur went to when he was upset, Phil's unease came back tenfold, turning into real worry. It had been a couple of hours, of searching, just because the woods were big, and Wilbur had several haunts. Phil wasn't sure exactly when he and Wilbur had fought, but it had been a long time. And as the sun inched past noon and on towards afternoon, Phil only got more concerned.

"Let's check back at the house." Phil said, finally "Maybe he came back and we missed him. Fucker probably is sitting by the fire all warm, already eating lunch,"

Tubbo laughed. A moment of silence fell as they turned back towards the house "What was Wil so upset about, anyway?"

Phil managed not to grimace, but barely "Ah, we had a bit of a fight before you showed up, Tubbo. Nothing to worry about. Wil's got a bit of a temper, you know. "

"Yeah, he can be scary when he's mad." Tubbo said, "But, if you just get his kneecaps, then you don't have to worry."

"I guess that'd work." Phil said, "But it was just an argument, no kneecap breaking needed."

"I didn't say break them. Just knock him off his feet. That ends arguments well." Tubbo said wisely..

"I'll keep that in mind mate." Phil agreed though he was only half-listening as Tubbo continued to ramble. Worry was gnawing at him and Phil really wished he hadn't brought Tubbo with him. Wilbur hadn't really left, had he? Phil had told him to but- Wil wouldn't, not without at least saying something to Tommy, would he?

No. Wilbur was probably back in the house and Phil could deal with him there.

It didn't take long to reach the house, but Wilbur wasn't in the living room or kitchen. The crafting room was empty, and Tubbo reported nothing in the storage room. Wilbur didn't respond when they called his name, either, but he was probably just pissed. That had to be it. It had to be. Phil could feel the anxiety in his chest rising.

.” Check the attic.” he instructed Tubbo, who’d just popped out of the storage room “He's probably there or in his room, ignoring us,”

Tubbo bounded up the steps ahead of Phil and scrambled up the ladder, as Phil headed to Wilbur's room. He opened the door and froze. His stomach dropped. The room was a disaster like a tornado had blown through it. Clothes were strewn about, and several were conspicuously missing from the draws. Books were scattered, and draws were tuned out. Phil could see that several books were gone and his guitar was too. Most of his things were still there, but the important things were gone. Wilbur wouldn't have taken those things if he was just moping.

Wilbur was gone.

Chapter End Notes

1. Comfort? In my fic? don't know her. I am so sorry that this is chapter 14 and we are still doing 90% angst. I swear there is a happy ending. However, I have been VERY excited to post this chapter. I've had the Phil and Wilbur fight planned and written since I was working on like, chapter 3 so I really hope you guys like it.
2. I made a tumblr specifically for this ao3 account. it is @iregretallmydecisions so the exact same as this. come say hi. I have posted nothing since I literally made that account this morning.
3. This chapter is a little shorter- do you guys prefer 6k chapters that are a little longer apart or 4.5k chapters closer together? I am beholden to the muses, of course, but I can take opinions
4. I feel like I need to say this, and this is all I'm gonna say about it, and no arguing in the comments- I'll restrict them, don't test me. Every single character, in canon, is an unreliable narrator. The same is said here. no character is 100% blameless and no character is 100% at fault. Wilbur has valid feelings but has also done shitty things. the

others are the same way. This story is not meant to demonize or 100% absolve any member of SBI+ Tubbo.

5. The support I get on this fic is insane. You all rock and every single one of your comments makes me smile and more than a few make me cry happy tears! I don't have the mental ability to respond to all of you, but know that I love you. You rock. I especially love seeing my repeat commentors! I know some of your names immediately now and anyway thank you. Everyone who reads, whether you comment, kudos, or just read, thank you!

try twice as hard, and i'm half as liked

Chapter Summary

this is angst people. I don't know what else to say

Chapter Notes

no real TWs, beyond the general stuff that has already been in this fic.

This takes place during the same time frame as last chapter, just what Techno and Tommy were up to.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy's eyes burned as he forced them open, heavy with exhaustion. His whole body hurt, like he'd gone rounds with a fucking enderman, and his body desperately wanted to go back to sleep, but his mind was already going too fast and Tommy knew there was no point in even trying to go back to sleep. He was awake, whether he liked it or not.

Tommy sat up, grimacing as his body protested loudly like it hadn't since war days when all he did was push himself to the limits and pass out at night "Fuck." he muttered. "What happened?"

He remembered going to bed, and- Tommy screwed his eyes shut as a wave of nausea and fear rolled over him. He clenched his hands tightly as the memories of his nightmare hit him, unable to suppress a shudder at the graphic images his mind had conjured. Shit that had been a fucked up dream.

Tommy forced himself to stand, shaking his head as he forcefully changed his line of thought. It was fucking early but he really didn't want to go back to sleep, not after that. He couldn't quite remember anything after it all went dark. He must've just.... slept. Whatever. Tommy could still see the bloody floor and absolute massacre behind his eyes, so he didn't particularly want to relive that, even if it hadn't been real. And the soreness in his body was

probably just a symptom of the nightmare- he'd probably slept in a weird position after a shitty night like that.

It was just barely past sunrise, as Tommy quietly got dressed. He didn't really want to be awake, but he didn't have a choice. Maybe he could eat and get out of the house before anyone was up and put off whatever he was doing with Technoblade until evening, or play off his exhaustion and skip it entirely.

Unfortunately, those hopes were dashed when he went downstairs to find Technoblade sitting at the kitchen table, eating something. Technoblade wasn't dressed for the day, which was odd, and he looked tired. "Morning," Tehcnoblade said evenly, a little too evenly "Didn't expect you to be up so early."

Tommy rolled his eyes as he collapsed at the table, reaching out and grabbing a piece of toast from Technoblade's plate, who just sent Tommy a flat look. Now that he was closer, Tommy could see a bruise forming on Technoblade's face, and long scratches running up his arms. One of his hands was bandaged as well. "You look like shit, big man. I'd hate to see the guy you fought if you look like that."

"Huh?" Tehcnboalde said, narrowing his eyes. "Tommy, what are you talkin' about?"

Tommy squinted at Technoblade "You've got scratches and shit on your arms, and you're got a bruised face, looks like you go into a fight." he said between bites of toast " You sleep fighting now?"

"Tommy, you're the 'other guy'" Tehcoblade said flatly "I take it you don't remember what happened last night?"

Tommy froze, toast dangling from his hands as his blood turned to ice. Fuck, had Tommy really gone ballistic last night? Shit, how had that even happened? He'd started locking his door, just in case. It made him feel better and it kept Wilbur out of his room. It felt too much like Pogtopia, sometimes, waking up screaming, with Wilbur running a hand through his hair, whispering it would be alright. In Pogtopia Wilbur had only done that if he felt he'd really upset Tommy and near the end, it had been no comfort at all, as his voice was laced with madness. Tommy had learned to keep his screams quiet, but this body.. Hadn't been taught so well yet. Tommy didn't remember getting up, but shit, had he? What-

“- hey, hey, Tommy,.” Tommy snapped back to reality at the sound of his name. “Tommy, you good?”

“What the fuck are you talking about?” Is what Tommy said, instead of all the things he was thinking. “I think I’d remember actually fighting the great Technoblade, and managing to get a face hit.”

TEchnobalde regarded him with an expression that looked uncomfortably like concern. Technboalde was giving him that look a lot, lately, and it was strange. Tommy didn’t want concern. He didn’t want pity. He just wanted to be left alone and pretend that everything was fine. He wanted to pretend he was 14 year old Tommy, who hadn’t been through war and shit. But, he couldn’t. Tehcnoblade’s stupid concern didn’t help.

And it was temporary anyway. Technoblade hadn’t looked at him like that, ever, even n exile. Never concern, just... annoyance, or at best, something that might be considered fond. Then there had just been rage or apathy. Technoblade had probably celebrated his death in the future. Tommy could work with those. Tommy could work with apathy, or hatred, or annoyance.

What the fuck was he supposed to do with pity? It wasn’t a useful emotion. Pity didn’t get you anywhere, it didn’t last, either.

Instead of answering him, Technoblade studied his face critically, like he was trying to work out a puzzle or some shit. “Don’t bother puttin’ on your cloak.” Technoblade said instead, as he rose to his feet “We’re goin’ to the nether.”

“That wasn’t an answer.” Tommy said, calling to Technoblade’s retreating back, “That didn’t answer my fucking question.”

“Fucking cryptic bastard.” Tommy grumbled, ignoring the unease in his chest “And he calls Wilbur was the dramatic one.”

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A half-hour later found Tommy and Techno standing in front of the Nether portal, built not far from the house, and Tommy was fucking cold, even if the portal was built in the edge of a cave, half-covered by vines. He shivered violently in the early morning light. The sun was just part sunrise but was still hanging low in the sky. "Let's get fucking going," he grumbled.

"Cold?" TEhcnobalde asked casually

"No." Tommy snapped, even as he shuddered again, wrapping his arms around himself "I don't get cold, Big man."

"Sure you don't," TEchnboalde said flatly. "Well, we're wasting time. Let's go."

The portal was large enough that Techno and Tommy could go through at the same time. Dimension travel felt really fucking weird like he was being pulled apart, but painlessly, like every single cell was just getting shocked with static. It had made him sick the first few times he'd done it, throwing up on the scorching netherack. It hadn't bothered him in a long time, though, so he wasn't expecting the nausea that welled up, as he stumbled out of the portal into the dry air of the nether. He gaged, clutching at the side of his spinning head as he tried to regain his center of balance. "Fuck." he cursed, using one arm to hold onto the obsidian. His vision sawm briefly, and for just a second Tommy was worried he was going to pass out.

But, vertigo passed and the worst of his nausea died down, leaving only a pounding headache in its place. "You alright Tommy? I forget that humans can get...disoriented if you don't come here often"

"I'm fine," Tommy said, staring at Technoblade who didn't look at all affected by the trip. Which, that made sense, probably since Technoblade was part Piglin, but it was still unfair. Bastard. "Guess this stupid body isn't as used to the Nether as I remembered."

"You spend a lot of time in the Nether in the future?" Technoblade asked casually, as Tommy finally released the portal frame.

"Yeah," Tommy found himself admitting, "Used it mostly for fast travel and shit."

Techno just hummed noncommittally, which was honestly worse than the questions that he'd been constantly pestering Tommy with. It made him uneasy. "Come on Tommy. We're going to go mining for netherite."

Technoblade set off then, and Tommy trailed after. Silence fell between them, as Tommy reoriented himself to the nether. He normally couldn't stand the silence and wasn't happy about it, but his head was still spinning, and throwing up would be far more embarrassing than just letting a weird silence sit over them. Techno mined out a passageway that was wide for the two of them to both start mining, and several blocks long, so they could mine in different directions. Techno also blocked off the entrance, so no mobs could follow them.

Tommy grimaced as Techno placed the last block of netherrack. He didn't particularly like enclosed spaces, but it was honestly better than being out in the nether. He hadn't been there in a while, for more than just fast travel. He felt vulnerable, naked, in just the diamond armor Techno let him borrow, after he'd gotten used to his netherite again.

They didn't bother with gold, since Techno was usually more than enough to ward off Piglins, and hopefully, they wouldn't even run into any. He could hear lava hissing just outside the small space, only lit up by a torch Techno had placed. and Tommy frowned, as his mind finally circled back to what happened earlier that morning. "You didn't answer my question earlier," Tommy stated before they could get started mining. "What the fuck were you talking about, me getting into a fight with you. I don't think I got you that bad sparring yesterday."

Technoblade let out a soft sigh "Well, I was hopin' to ask you, Tommy. You had a night terror and went ballistic. Wilbur was freakin' out, so I busted open the door. You freaked out when he tried to touch you and I ended up havin' to restrain you."

Tommy swallowed hard but tried for a nonchalant shrug that felt stiff even to himself "Sorry about that big man, but you know. I fucking locked my door for a reason. I would've been fine. "

"Tommy, you'd been screaming for like, ten minutes, and Wilbur thought you were gonna go out the window again. And I'm not sure you wouldn't have if I hadn't grabbed you."

Technoblade sounded vaguely concerned again and Tommy scowled.

“I was fine.” He hissed “I’m not a child, Technobalde. I can-I can take care of myself, I don’t need someone to come to me just because I had a stupid nightmare.”

“Tommy that was a night terror, or something.” Technoblade said, stopping just in front of Tommy so that Tommy was forced to stop too “You literally bit me, tryin’ to escape.”

“You were holdin’ me, hostage, what the fuck was I supposed to do?” Tommy snapped, “Apparently I wasn’t doing much thinking, Technoblade.”

“What were you even seeing, Tommy?”

“I... Everyone was dead. I’d gone ballistic, or something, I don’t fucking know and killed everyone. There. Happy now?” Tommy snapped, shoving past Technoblade “Now, can we actually get the mining and shit done? If you want to interrogate me, can we do it after we leave the Nether? I had this fucking place. ”

“We aren’t done talking, Tommy,” Technoblade warned and unlike every other time, his voice left no room for argument. “I’ve got more questions, and you’re gonna answer them before we get home. “

“Whatever you say, Big Man.” Tommy grumbled, swallowed around the lump of fear in his throat “I just want to get enough netherite for a fucking sword.”

Tommy hated mining. He really, really did. But, he eagerly pulled out his pickaxe and got to work, because it was better than that fucking mask boring holes in his face, with something suspiciously like both pity and anger on Technoblade’s face.

It honestly didn’t take long to find enough netherite for a sword. Part of him wanted to keep going - find enough for a full set of armor too- some that was his own, not something that could be snatched away, be blown up- Tommy forcefully sent his pickaxe into his inventory. He needed to get out of the fucking Nether.

“I’ve got enough, Tommy called “ as he entered the twisting Tunnel that TEchnboalde had mined out. “Got enough to make the biggest sword ever, the best sword!”

“It can’t be too big Tommy, or you won’t be able to wield it right.” Technoblade corrected, as he practically materialized from the long dark hall of his own mineshaft “That wouldn’t make sense.”

“It’s not about the actual size, you idiot.” Tommy said, because, duh, “It’s about the energy. Technoblade. And I have big man energy, The Biggest man! So my sword will simply have big sword vibes. It will be the biggest sword.”

“That doesn’t even make sense,” Technoblade said, and despite the mask, Tommy was certain that Technoblade was squinting at him in confusion.

Tommy grinned “You don’t make sense, Big Man, now come on, let’s go. I hate this fucking mine.”

A short trek later found them going back through the portal. This time, Tommy was more prepared for the vertigo and recovered much more quickly, though he did, embarrassingly, have to lean on Techno for support, after he tripped over his own damn feet.

“It’s dark.” Tommy comment, with a frown, as he took in his surroundings “I didn’t think we were in the Netherthat long.”

Technoblade shrugged “It’s easy to lose track of time in there. I wouldn’t worry about it.”

“Whatever.” Tommy said and shivered “Let’s go. I want to start on my sword. It’s gonna be so pog!”

“Not so fast.” Technoblade said, “I said earlier we weren’t done talking and I meant it.”

“Ah, come on now, Technoblade, we’ve been in the Nether is this really the right time for this?” Tommy offered what he hoped was a convincing grin as he tried to brush past Technoblade, towards the house. Tommy really, really, really didn’t want to rehash his stupid nightmare. What good would that do?

Tommy didn’t make it far, because Technoblade grabbed Tommy’s shoulder and spun him around, and Tommy couldn’t help but flinch.”You were rambling and nearly said something about the future, I think, so I slapped a hand over your mouth to keep you quiet and you bit me. I kicked Wilbur and Phil out, just to hold up my end of the bargain. Now, it’s time for you to hold up yours.”

Tommy scowled at the ground, refusing to meet Technoblade’s eyes. Part of him burned with shame, because ender, he was a fucking wreck. A useless mess, who couldn’t keep his mouth shut, and only got himself further in debt to Technoblade and probably pissed everyone else off. He was a soldier. A survivor. He was better than this. But, he’d agreed to this, and, for now, Technoblade was on his side. It was like he was on top of a cobblestone tower, teetering over lava and a fucking ravine, with no choice but to jump off one side.

“Fine.” Tommy ground out, “What do you want to know?”

“Well, after you nearly took a chunk out of my skin, you calmed down, and halfway woke up and recognized me.” Technoblade explained, face carefully blank “You begged me not to let him take you, saying that you’d rather die first.”

Tommy’s blood ran cold. He’d begged Technoblade for that? Of all people? He’d practically admitted to Dream being there, fucking hell. “Tommy, who were you scared of?”

Tommy shook his head. “Techno I can’t-”

“I’m not taking no for an answer, Tommy.” Technoblade said firmly, “I’ve been keepin’ my mouth shut for you, and I want to help you, really, but to be honest? I don’t really believe this timeline story you’re selling. You’re still a bad liar Tommy. So just tell me the truth.”

Technoblade paused and then there was a tone in his voice Tommy didn’t completely recognize. “Tommy, you won’t have to worry about whoever he is. Chat is calling for his blood. IT would be easy for me to keep my word/ ”

Tommy swallowed a laugh that was probably more manic than anything. Techno was out for blood for him? Not his blood? He thought he was in the past, but maybe he’d just slipped into an alternate universe. Even if it was only because of Technoblade’s twisted sense of honor, it felt strange. “I-I won’t tell you his name.” and then, he hated the way his voice shook, the way his breath was shaky.

“I-I can’t. You caught me about the timeline, alright? I don’t give a shit about it. In fact, I hope I derail it.” Tommy spat. “Because it wasn’t always pretty Technoblade. And that bastard, that- I don’t even want him to know I exist, Technoblade. And you killing him? Even if it holds up some promise I don’t even remember you making, I don’t care. If we can all stay away from him, that’s all I want.”

Tommy finally lifted his eyes to meet Technoblade’s face, but behind the boar skull mask, Tommy couldn’t quite read the expression on Technoblade’s face.

“Is he the one that killed you?” Technoblade asked, “Took your first life?”

Tommy choked on a surprised laugh. First life? Of course, of course, Technoblade would assume it was his first life. Why would he think anything else, when he was still seeing a kid, not a soldier who’d been through hell and back. Maybe he was just tired, or emotional, or still disoriented from the jump into the nether, but he found he couldn’t stop the words tumbling out of his mouth. “My first life? Fuck, technically he didn’t, but he still orchestrated it, all of us getting blown to high heaven. The second one was all him though.”

“You’re second life-”

Tommy just talked over Technoblade. He'd wanted answers so he was getting them. "I assume you're asking about my last death, the one that got me here. That one.. he actually didn't have anything to do with that one. Lots of people were pissed at me, so it wasn't like it wasn't exactly a surprise that someone else offed me, really."

"You lost all three lives," Technoblade wasn't asking, simply stating. Tommy only just suppressed a shiver at the complete lack of emotion in Technoblade's voice. "At sixteen?"

"Almost seventeen." Tommy corrected, because shit, he hadn't meant to say any of this, but he'd already fucked up, all he'd done, apparently, was fuck up, so why not deal the deal? "I'm not a child, Technoblade. I haven't been in a while."

"Yeah, you are." Technoblade snapped, voice suddenly full of anger. That was better than the coldness or even the pity. "Tommy, how the hell did that happen?"

"I died. Got into some stupid fights I couldn't win" Tommy said, flashing a smile that was nothing but angry "And I fucking lost. That's it, Big Man. TommyInnit, always taking on fights he can't win, always losing, but somehow still scraping by. Guess that last time I wasn't so fucking lucky.. But, it doesn't matter. I've got three new lives to spare, Technoblade. No need to worry about that,."

"Who let it happen?" Technoblade demanded "Where was Wilbur? Or Phil? Even Tubbo-"

"Leave Tubbo out of this." Tommy snapped because really, Technoblade had no right, none at all to talk about Tubbo. Not when he'd taken one of Tubbo's lives himself and nearly killed him on Doomsday. Tommy hadn't forgotten those things, not by a long shot, even if this Technoblade hadn't done it yet. "Tubbo was doing the best he could. Wilbur... Wilbur couldn't do anything. And Phil? he wasn't exactly around the first two times. The last time, he was there, but he was probably off with you throwing a fucking party because I was finally gone. The bastard who wronged you, finally gone, and you didn't even have to do the work."

Technoblade paled beneath his mask, and even in the dark, Tommy could see his reddish eyes narrowed in anger. Good, He was still angry. Tommy wanted him to be angry. "What are you talkin' about Tommy? Phil and I would never-"

“Oh fuck off, you would and you know it.” Tommy said, letting out a bitter laugh, “I know you’re only doing this because you made a promise to me and you have your weird fucking honor thing. I get it. Just don’t act like you really care, because I know you don’t. I’ve been down that road before and it ended in blood.”

Tommy’s heart was hammering in his chest, some mix of rage, guilt, fear, and sorrow weighing down on him that, just as suddenly as it came, vanished, and Tommy was left with.. Nothing. Nothing but exhaustion and the urge to just, lay down on the ground and never get back up. “I’m going home. I’m done talking about this Technoblade. I-I can’t do anymore tonight.”

He didn’t wait for Technoblade’s response as he turned on his heel and headed toward the house, glowing faintly in the distance.

Phil was in the main room, stretching his aching wings as he stared into the fire. Tubbo was still with them- he hadn’t left since the day they realized Wilbur was gone and that Techno and Tommy were also missing in action. Phil was almost certain they had gone to the Nether and were simply suffering a time glitch, but he was concerned. The Nether was a dangerous place, even for Techno, and especially for Tommy, who had very little experience in the Nether at all.

Phil jumped, slightly, as the front door slammed open, his hand instantly going for his sword, before he realized it was Tommy, who, upon first glance, looked tired, but overall healthy.

“Tommy!” Phil exclaimed, jumping to his feet, so he could look at Tommy up close. “Are you alright?”

“I’m fine.” Tommy snapped as he took a step back, stopping Phil in his tracks. “I’m fine Phil, ender, I’m not fragile.” Right. Touching Tommy was... bad idea, more than likely.

Phil frowned “I didn’t say you were mate. I was just asking. Where is your- where’s Technoblade?”

A strange expression passed over Tommy’s face like he’d tasted something sour, but before he could answer, Tehcnoblade came in the still-open door. “I’m here, Phil. Sorry, we must’ve lost track of time in the Nether.”

And, Phil noted something in Technoblade’s voice, in his posture, that set alarm bells off, though he wasn’t exactly sure why. “For three days?” Phil asked, and Tommy’s mouth fell open.

“It’s been how long?” Tommy asked, incredulous “We only mined for like, two fucking hours! How is that possible”

“Time glitch.” Technobabble said darkly, putting the pieces together before Phil could answer “Admins who can’t be bothered to maintain anything on their own server. I should-”

“Not the time,” Phil reprimanded, though he had similar sentiments. The admins on this server were some of the most negligent he’d ever met. They only seemed to do things if offered a proper incentive, which after letting the Nether slip again, Phil would not hesitate to offer, at the blade of his sword “I don’t disagree, but, cool it. We’ll discuss that later. I need to tell you both something.”

“What is it?” Tommy asked impatiently.

Phil tried not to grimace. Tommy had always been attached to Wilbur, even if in recent days he’d been clinging to Technoblade a bit more, Tommy was still closer to Wilbur. “Wilbur left.”

“Heh?” Technoblade seemed surprised at that and perhaps confused. Phil could read it in his body language, even with the mask. That, however, was nothing in comparison to Tommy’s face which had gone completely and totally blank.

“He what?” Tommy asked, and his voice was low and scarily controlled. Phil halfway wished Tommy had shouted instead.

“We had an argument and he stormed off. I thought he was blowing off steam, but he didn’t come back and all his shit’s gone. He left the server and it looks permanent from all the shit he took.” Phil admitted, and couldn’t quite help the annoyance in his tone. He didn’t care that Wilbur wanted to leave. If Wilbur had just asked. Phil would’ve been more than happy to help him pick a destination or just, let him go. It was the theatrics, the shouting, that still made Phil angry.

“Why?” Technoblade “He what?” asked, this time, and he glanced over at his eldest, away from Tommy’s eerily blank expression.

“He was spouting shit about feeling left out. I have no idea. He wasn’t making good sense, talking about how he felt abandoned or something. You know how Wilbur gets when he’s emotional. He was screaming about wanting to leave, so I told him to. Didn’t think he’d do it though.” Phil hadn’t, honestly, expected Wilbur to actually leave. He’d mentioned it... Never, as far as Phil could remember, a whim that came out of nowhere. But apparently, Wilbur listened and had meant it.

“Fuck you, Philza” Tommy’s voice was still quiet, but when Phil looked back at him, his blue eyes were filled with a terrible mix of rage and fear.

“Excuse me?” Phil snapped because that wasn’t the reaction he had expected from Tommy. Technoblade’s face was unreadable behind his mask.

“Tommy-”

“Fuck you. “ Tommy repeated, this time properly shouting “Why did I think this would be any different, you never gave a shit about Wilbur or me, before. You- you only seem to notice me now that you think I’m crazy, just like your precious Technoblade.”

Tommy let out a choked laugh that was filled with bitterness that didn’t sound right coming out of a fourteen-year-old “I hoped- I was fucking stupid for hoping, I should know that by

now. You don't care, Phil, and I don't know why I ever thought you would. I knew I couldn't trust you. I can't believe was this stupid."

"You're sounding like Wilbur." Phil snapped "What do you even mean?"

Tommy gave him a look that was angry and scared and... disgusted. Tommy looked *disgusted*. "I can't- I can't fucking stand to be in the same room as you, you absolutely asshole. If you can't see it now, then you never fucking will."

With that proclamation, tears welled in Tommy's blue eyes, he stormed past Phil, up the steps, and a few moments later, what sounded like the attic door slammed, leaving Phil and Technoblade standing in a quiet kitchen.

"What the fuck." Phil muttered, staring at the steps Tommy had disappeared up a few moments ago.

"That... went well." Technoblade said as he pulled off a mask. Something vaguely akin to amusement colored his voice, though Phil could the uncharacteristic concern behind his reddish eyes.

"Fuck off Techno," Phil said, though there wasn't any heat behind it, and Technoblade wouldn't take offense. He sighed heavily as he sat at the table." What was he even talking about? Sounding like Wilbur, saying that I played favorites, that I didn't care. I do care about them, both of them, but apparently, that wasn't enough" He had done the best he could, for all his kids, hadn't he? Phil buried his face in his hands, trying to ease his temper. Yelling wouldn't solve this. Especially yelling at Technoblade who had nothing to do with this argument.

"Phil," Phil could hear the soft concern in Technoblade's voice, as his son's hand rested on his shoulders.

"Ender, Techno, why are they so angry?" And all the anger was gone out of Phil now. Wilbur had been one thing, with hurtful words and long rants, painting himself the victim. Tommy

was angry, he was hurt, but he had also seemed resigned. Like somehow he'd expected this. That was worse than the anger and something ugly twisted in Phil's gut.

He lifted his head, to look at the man that had once been his eldest son, who now wouldn't even claim him as a father. He'd always thought that was just Technoblade and all his issues, but had it been Phil? "Was I a good father, Technoblade? Are they right?"

Technoblade's shoulder slumped and he heaved a heavy sigh, averting his gaze from Phil's. He shifted uncomfortably and worked his jaw in a way that meant he was thinking carefully about what he was about to say.

Something tightened in Phil's chest and he wished he could take the question back, and not just because he didn't want to hear the answer. It wasn't fair to force Technoblade to answer that.

But, they were both saved from whatever Technoblade had been about to say, by a frantic knock on the front door.

Chapter End Notes

1) Sorry this took so long. I wasn't sure where I wanted to go with this chapter and I also have a life outside of writing, unfortunately. But, here it is! Take it for what it is! It was not proofread <3

2) Phil will become a good dad. I swear there will be comfort. I SWEAR. I know this is chapter 15, and I've said that since chapter 1 but I'm not lying I swear. they just have to earn it.

3) Next chapter will have Tommy POV for the reaction because I can't not give ya'll that. It will absolutely be worse than this :) I wouldn't deprive you of that.

4) Hey who is at the door? I will give you one hint, it is NOT Wilbur. Give me predictions!! Also this wasn't supposed to be a cliffhanger, but it was stop here or go for like, 3000 more words so

5) Uhh ILY people. You folks rock. Drop a comment if you love it. Don't tell me if you hate it bc I'm weak and will cry lmao. I mean, give me hate if you want bc that means

I'm still living rent-free in your head so who is really the winner here? Speaking of attention go check out my tumblr, @iregretallmydecisions.

6) I regret to inform all of you that I now have an actual plot for this fic. However, on good news, I am unsure how many chapters it will take to accomplish this, but probably more than the predicted twenty. Ya'll remember when I said this would be a ten chapter fic? lol.

though the truth may vary

Chapter Summary

Someone is at the door, things don't go well.

Chapter Notes

oof i feel like this chapter is a little rushed but I've been agonizing over it for days so eh. Take it for what it is.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy didn't bother going to his room, couldn't stand the idea of the busted door that he couldn't lock, so he climbed up, up into the attic, with the big windows and open space. He'd failed. He'd been in the past not even a month, and he'd failed. Wilbur was gone. Already up and out and Tommy hadn't done anything about it.

Wilbur left again, and this time he left Tommy behind. Tommy couldn't help the sob that escaped. How had he been so stupid? To think that he could change anything> That he could do anything right? Wilbur had told him, in Pogtopia, over and over, that he was useless, worthless, stupid, and- told him he would never be president.

~~And it was never about the presidency to Tommy, really, now was it?~~

Tommy remembered the fight from the first time around, the ender awful fight that had almost rattled the window, from the sounds of Wilbur screaming and Phil finally, *finally* shouting right back. Tommy had gotten involved too, when he walked in on it, backing up Wilbur, not just because it was what Tommy did (always having Wilbur's back, always going to bat for him, even when Tommy knew he couldn't take the hit)

Wilbur had stormed out first, and Tommy had only lingered behind a moment. "Wilbur was more like a dad to me than you ever were." he'd shouted, angry and raging, and he hadn't quite meant it, not really, but he was hurt and he wanted his dad- Phil- to hurt too.

And it had worked, because almost a year later, the next time he saw Phil, Phil had told him that he didn't see Tommy as his son, he'd disowned him before he'd even washed Wilbur's blood from his hands. Maybe he'd blamed Tommy for Wilbur's spiral. Maybe he was right. It hadn't mattered, because Phil hadn't been his dad in a long time.

Tommy couldn't even prevent that, it seemed. Maybe Tommy was just a fuck up.

"Tommy?" The attic door creaked open and it was Tubbo, looking drowsy but concerned, as he poked his dark head up through the trap door. "What's wrong? Why are you crying?"

"I'm not crying." Tommy snapped, as he wiped tears from his eyes. His voice was hoarse, from shouting and sobbing, and the ash of the Nether. "Phil is just a dick. A massive dick, who- who couldn't give a shit about us Tubbo. He doesn't care about anyone but himself and Techno."

"What makes you say that?" Tubbo asked voice laced with nothing but confusion and concern as he crawled across the attic floor to where Tommy was sitting, and shit if Tommy's heart didn't fucking ache.

Tubbo's eyes were sad, but still so light. So optimistic, like Tommy hadn't seen them in years. His face wasn't scarred and despite the obvious sleep in his eyes, Tubbo didn't look tired. His horns hadn't grown in yet, and he just looked.. young.

And fuck, wasn't it sad that Tommy's best friend had looked old at seventeen? Tommy hated himself for what he was about to say, for the pain he was spewing but Tubbo needed to understand. He'd already practically failed Wilbur. He couldn't fail Tubbo too. He swallowed down another sob "Come on TUBbo, Phil always is off with Techno and doesn't really care about us. And Wilbur- Wilbur apparently just decided to up and leave us to, the absolute bastard."

"Phil does care, I think." Tubbo said, quietly, coming to sit beside Tommy "And Wilbur was angry Tommy. You know how he gets. He wouldn't have left us if he didn't think we'd be okay."

Tommy bit back a bitter laugh. That wasn't true. Wilbur would leave them. He had in this timeline, and he had in Tommy's. He'd left them in Hypixel before the SMP, and then he'd left Tubbo behind with Schlatt, forcing Tubbo to work under that bastard's reign. Then, worst, he'd fucking died. He'd left Tommy and Tubbo when they needed him most. He'd forced Tubbo to be president, at seventeen damn years old because he was a bastard who couldn't see past his own ass.

And Tommy couldn't even hate him. He couldn't muster the rage he felt at Phil or Technoblade, sometimes. Certainly not the hate he felt towards Dream or Schlatt, no Tommy had desperately missed Wilbur every day, even though he knew Wilbur had changed. Had gone crazy.

He thought it had started on the SMP, but maybe it started here when they were kids and Tommy just hadn't noticed.

Maybe Tommy started it early, this time. Because of him, Wilbur had run off and hadn't bothered packing a bag for him and Tubbo. Hadn't even bothered to say goodbye. Maybe if he'd avoid Technoblade more. If he'd been stronger. If he hadn't had his stupid nightmares. If he wasn't so-

"Tommy, it's okay. Wilbur's coming back." Tubbo soothed quietly and Tommy distantly realized he wasn't breathing. His chest felt tight and there wasn't nearly enough air in the attic for his lungs. "Just, uh, death or some shit." Tubbo's arm wrapped around Tommy's shoulder, a familiar weight.

Tommy let out a startled laugh because that was such a Tubbo thing to say, and truth be told, the touch of his best friend was still familiar, a comforting warmth on his shoulders. It was Tubbo, after all, and Tubbo sometimes knew Tommy better than himself. Unfortunately, Tommy knew Wilbur better than most people, even Tubbo.

"No he isn't," Tommy said quietly because even if he'd fucked up the timeline, this was still the same. Even if he had changed things, Tommy knew, in his heart, in his very fucking

bones, that Wilbur wasn't coming back. If one thing was a constant across every timeline, it was Wilbur's pride. He'd rather die than even consider dragging himself back to this server, even if he wanted to. "Bastard is too ender damned stubborn."

No, Wilbur would travel now, and explore, and become the man Tommy had reunited with on the SMP. The man who had a son, and secrets, and enough insanity to blow up a country. If Tommy didn't act now, Wilbur would go down that same path.

And it was like something cool settled over his mind, like adrenaline settling in the heat of battle. "We need to go after him." Tommy said, suddenly "Tubbo, we need to leave this ender damned server. Phil doesn't care and Techno- " Technoblade was softer than Tommy remembered him ever being, but fireworks and withers still flashed through Tommy's mind, if he let himself think about it "Techno only cares when he wants to. We- we need to go after Wilbur before he does something monumentally stupid."

Tubbo just stared at him with large eyes and for a heart-stopping moment, Tommy thought he was going to say no, or that he was going to call for Phil and Techno, to try and stop him. But Tubbo just grinned after a moment "I always thought some adventure would be nice! This server is boring as shit anyway since Phil banned explosives. I have a bunch of shit here so we can leave once Techno and Phil fall asleep."

TommyInnit is a big man, the biggest man, some might say, and big men don't need hugs. But, if he pulled his best friend in for a hug, gripping him tight for just a moment, overcome by the sheer loyalty shining in Tubbo's eyes, well, no one else was in the attic to see it. "Great. Let's go pack and shit. I'll go downstairs and get some food since I didn't eat earlier. Phil is probably too pissed to talk to me anyway."

Tommy knew it probably wasn't smart, but hell, there was a good chance Phila and Techno were out. If they weren't he'd just ignore them. The silent treatment wasn't usually his strong suit, but he could pull it off long enough o grab some fucking bread. "Okay!" Tubbo agreed "I'll go through my shit and we'll meet in your room to pack the rest. I think I still have a few fire arrows I saved!"

Tommy couldn't help but grin at Tubbo's excitement, at his absolute willingness to come along with Tommy. This was still his best friend, the dynamic duo. And maybe, just maybe, they could find Wilbur and keep him from ever joining that damn SMP with them. If anyone could help him, it'd be Tubbo.

Phil was so fucking over this day. Actually, he was over this entire month. He wanted to go back about a month and tell his slightly younger self what he was in for and pray to any god that might listen that it didn't shake out the same way. Unfortunately, as well-read and traveled as he was, Phil had yet to encounter time-travel.

"Expecting anyone?" Technoblade asked quietly, his hand drifting down to allow his sword to appear in his hand. "Tubbo"

Phil shook his head, as he slowly rose to his own feet. He didn't draw his weapon, not yet, but was ready for a moment's notice. "No. Tubbo's asleep in Wil's room if Tommy's shouting didn't wake him. Been here since Wil left."

"Could it be Wilbur?" Technoblade suggested, and Phil could tell Techno didn't even believe that suggestion himself. Wilbur wouldn't have knocked. He'd have blown in without hesitation, and they both knew it.

"He was pissed, Techno. I don't think he'd come home so soon," Phil pursed his lips "if he ever does." Wilbur was angry and Wilbur was proud. Wilbur was a stubborn son of a bitch and it wouldn't exactly surprise Phil if his son didn't ever come home. Phil didn't really want to think about that possibility.

The knocking hadn't stopped, if anything it had gotten more instant, more frantic. "Hello?" someone called, and their voice sounded vaguely like Technoblade, accented differently than Phil's own. "Hello! I can hear you guys!"

They didn't sound threatening, from the other side of the thick wooden door, but they did sound desperate. Desperate people did stupid things, Phil knew. Phil adjusted his wings so that they were pulled tight against his back, as he slowly made his way to the door. Behind him, Technoblade placed himself a few steps back, firmly blocking the way to the steps. Whoever it was could simply be a lost traveler, or it could be a bounty hunter. Or worse yet,

someone looking for the Angel of Death. Phil had no energy for visitors tonight, friendly or not, and especially no patience for anyone who might be a threat.

The knocking only got louder, and more irritating, before Phil finally opened the door.

He positioned himself in the small gap, blocking the door with one side of his body, so that if wherever was out there was an invader, they'd have a much harder time opening the door. However, the person on the other side of the door didn't look like any sort of mercenary. In fact, he didn't look much older than Wilbur or Technoblade. In the dim outside light, it was hard to make out distinct features, but he had hair that flopped down over his forehead and wide eyes that were filled with surprise. He was clutching a glowing book to his chest and nearly stumbled at the door vanishing from under his hand.

In the end, he didn't really look like a threat, not in the slightest, but he was still mostly bathed in darkness and threats didn't always come in recognizable forms. The single empty heart on his chest was proof enough of that. Phil had a life to spare, but he didn't want to give it up just yet if he could help it.

"Can I help you?" Philza asked, his voice carefully neutral. He didn't want to seem too inviting or too hostile, not yet.

"Philza?" The man asked, sounding almost incredulous and Phil couldn't help the way he tensed immediately. He didn't know this man, of that he was certain, but he seems to know him. That usually didn't end well, as only those with intent to harm or intent to hire showed up, knowing his name. But, this man seemed.... Surprised to see him, contradicting his initial assessment.

"

Why are you...? Oh no, this isn't ideal" The man muttered, eyes drifting from Phil for a moment, as he seemed to be talking to himself. Then with a visible shake, he looked back and Philza, all focus. But, uh I need your help. Do you know where I can find TommyInnit? I'm looking for a TommyInnit"

Phil's tension turned into something heavier. He had no idea who this man was, let alone why he was looking for Tommy, of all people. Any pretense of friendliness was gone because Phil certainly had no patience for strangers when they wanted his son, even if his son was angry at him "Why? Who are you?"

“Doesn’t matter who I am.” The man said, shaking his head. He swallowed hard and Phil could practically feel the nerves radiating off of him and for all accounts, he looked like an exhausted, sick man. That was offset by something else, however. something... strange that made the feather’s on Phil’s wings ruffle. “It’s a very urgent matter. I need to speak with him, like now. Please. It’s a matter of life or death.”

“Is that a threat?” Technoblade snapped from behind Phil and the man’s eyes snapped to him and he swallowed audibly.

“Technoblade? Oh, I’m honked.” The man said and laughed nervously, “No it isn’t a threat, please, don’t kill me! I swear I’m not here to hurt anyone. I-I need to speak to Tommy. Do you know where he is? It-”

The man cut off as, for the lack of a better word, glitched. He doubled over, letting out a small cry, and for just a moment, it was like looking through a cloud, or a destroyed piece of glass. The man went fuzzy, his face distorted completely, like each of his atoms were repelled from each other. Then, in a split second, it was gone.

“What the fuck was that, mate?” Philza asked, “What the fuck are you?”

“I’m a human.” the man protested, as he righted himself, still clutching the book to his chest. “Well, probably. I... it’s complicated. But, please, Philza, I know you don’t know me, but if you know where Tommy is, I need to speak to him. Now.”

“You’re in no position to be making demands here.” Technoblade said lowly “Cause we don’t know you, but you apparently know us.”

“And I’m not letting you anywhere near my son until you tell me what it is you want with him.” Phil snapped. The man certainly didn’t look well, but honestly? Phil didn’t care. This man was not part of their family and was potentially a threat to his family. He wasn’t human, not fully. Phil was as sure of it as the wings on his back.

And, this strange man was trying to speak to Phil's mentally unstable fourteen-year-old son, who was probably in the midst of a breakdown. Phil didn't really care what this man wanted, he wasn't letting him get near Tommy' if he could help it. Not tonight.

The man's face was an open book, so Phil easily saw the confusion that ran across his face, followed by some mix of fear and exhaustion. "Please, I'm not a threat. You just saw me! I'm here to -"

"What the fuck, is that Karl Jacobs?"

Phil, startled, and turned around to find Tommy, eyes red-rimmed and hair mussed, standing just behind Technoblade. He'd obviously been crying, and his face was twisted up somewhere between confusion, anger, and fear. Phil honestly hadn't expected to see downstairs so soon. He also hadn't expected his son to recognize the man.

The man, Karl, nodded vehemently, looking more than a little relieved. "Yes! Tommy, I'm so glad I found you! I've been -" Karl made to step in the house, but Technoblade scowled, holding a hand out to stop Karl.

"Not so fast." Technoblade glanced at Tommy with a strange expression, which made Phil nervous. Normally he could read Technoblade like that. He could read Tommy, but whatever was spacing between his sons was outside his understanding. "Is this..?"

"No," Tommy responded loudly, quickly, something like panic flashing in his eyes. "No! Karl, Karl's fine, even if I'm confused as to how the hell he's here. But let him in Phil, it's fine."

It certainly wasn't fine, because Phil had no idea who this strange man was, who knew his son, who Tommy apparently knew and he was going to demand an explanation but Technoblade caught his eye and shook his head ever so slightly. Phil hesitated, but it was Technoblade. Technoblade wouldn't let a threat they couldn't handle into the house. So, he moved away from the door, allowing the young man to stumble in.

In the light, Karl looked even worse than Phil originally thought. His clothes were all monochromatic like they'd been bleached of all color, and his skin was a shade of grey that Phil had never seen on a living person. His hair was brown, but it was faded to an almost ashy color, and he looked thin and pale, minus dark bags under his eyes.

"Thank you," Karl said to Phil, sounding genuinely grateful, if not a little scared. He stumbled slightly, then swayed on his feet. He barely looked at Technoblade then his eyes locked on Tommy, who looked like he was seeing a ghost or something.

"You look like shit." Tommy said automatically, as he stepped closer to Karl.

Karl snorted, though it sounded more pained than anything, "Thanks, Tommy. You don't look so hot yourself."

"Fuck off." Tommy snapped, though Phil noted there wasn't a terrible amount of heat behind it. "What the hell are you doing here? How are you here?"

Karl's smile, as tired as it was, slipped a bit. "I, uh, need to talk to you, Tommy. And It needs to be fast because" he grimaced, as Phil watched a glitch run up his leg. Tommy noticed too if the look on his face was anything to go by "Well I don't have much time."

"You don't have much time- what the fuck does that mean? And you still haven't answered my questions. How the hell are you here?" Tommy turned to Phil and Technoblade. "And can you two leave? I think this is a private conversation, thanks."

"Not a chance, mate." Phil snapped, crossing his arms.

To his surprise, Technoblade put a hand on his arm. "Let's just step outside, Phil, alright." Before Phil could even protest, because he certainly had some protests, leaving some strange half-human man alone with his youngest, he was dragged out the door, into the cold night air.

“What the fuck Technoblade.” Phill hissed, wrenching his arm free. “I refuse to-”

Tehcnoblade pressed a finger to his lips and tilted his head towards the door. Oh. Phil’s irritation simmered down. Just because they were outside it didn’t mean that they couldn’t hear what was happening, especially not when Tommy was involved. Phil sent Techno a look of apology, for snapping at him, when Techno obviously had a plan. So he closed his eyes, and listened, hoping that maybe, just maybe, he could get some answers from this.

--

Techno had no idea who was on the other side of the door with Tommy, but if he had to guess, it was someone from the future. Someone that looked like shit and that didn’t seem quite human. And okay, should he be allowing Phil to listen, or even listen himself? Probably not, but when he’d just learned that Tommy had apparently died, like, completely, he didn’t really fancy leaving Tommy alone with some stranger.

“I didn’t realize Phil was actually your father.” Karl said, breaking the silence from the other side of the door, which is not what Techno was expecting “I thought those were just rumors since you and Wilbur were so close. Or maybe I just forgot...things are running together a little. ”

“Phil adopted me.” Tommy said voice clipped “He just disowned me after he, well, you know what happened to Wilbur and cemented that after Doomsday.”

Phil disowned Tommy? That didn’t make sense, not in any way, but... Techno swallowed as the memory of Tommy spitting bitter words in his face, not even a full hour ago. *‘he was probably off with you throwing a fucking party because I was finally gone’* Tommy had said and the uncomfortable feeling in his gut only got worse with each revelation.

“Oh.” Karl said, more quietly quietly “Sorry, I- maybe I knew that? My memory, well it isn’t great these days. Did you tell me that during Pogtopia?”

“Karl, you weren’t in Pogtopia.” Tommy said, voice lacing confusion. Though Technoblade was certain he was more confused. The heck was a Pogtopia? Or Doomsday? “You were on Manburg’s side, what the fuck are you talking about?”

“No, I know I was... wasn’t I? I...”

There was the sound of someone grunting in pain, the creak of a chair, and Tommy cursing “Shit, Karl, what the fuck? What was that?”

“That’s why I don’t have much time,” Karl said, and Techno could tell he was in pain. He had to be glitching again, or whatever the hell he wanted to call it. “Tommy, I’m a time-traveler. I have been for a while and now I’m -”

“You’re a fucking what?” Tommy exclaimed and Techno inhaled sharply, despite his better judgment. This guy was a time-traveler?

“A time-traveler.” Karl repeated “And, uh, not like you. I can’t control it exactly, but you aren’t really meant to do this Tommy, fixing timelines. This job was mine. I’d been doing it for months chronologically. .”

“Are you taking me back?” Tommy asked, slowly, and Techno could hear the anger in his tone, barely masking the fear.

“No!” Karl said, practically shouting “No, Tommy I can’t take you back. Uh, that’s what’s wrong with me. The timeline we originally form is...well, it’s practically gone. It got erased by the universe, and tat’s why I’m glitching. I’m about to get erased. “Atthis point. I’m only holding on because I’ve been traveling for ages and I’ve been trying to find you. You have to fix the timeline.”

“What?” Tommy asked, “The fuck does that man, Jacobs? Am I in an alternate universe?”

“I’m not explaining this well,” Karl said and laughed nervously, and a little pained. Techno wished he could see their faces “No, it’s... the future is changed by you being here, which is the point of why you were sent back, basically.”

“Karl, the hell are you talking about- and shit mate do you need a healing pot?” Tommy sounded angry, concerned, and confused all at once. There was a cry of pain, and Techno would be the man glitching again. He was being erased by the universe, apparently, which made no fucking sense. Shit, was Tommy going to be erased?

“No, no,” Karl said finally and sounded hoarse. “It won’t do anything. When the original timeline started going, I vaguely, uh, remember trying that on the others. Didn’t help. The universe or whatever gave me the ability to time travel is the only thing keeping me from being completely gone.”

“So why am I here? Why are you here?” Tommy asked “What the fuck is going on? The last thing I remember is- well, dying.”

Karl coughed, sounding far weaker than he had before “Tommy, after you died, well, I can’t remember exactly, but it was bad. The Egg went crazy. I was supposed to stop it, I was supposed to fix it, but I didn’t. I’d been spending months traveling, trying to change things, and-” the man’s voice cracked “I failed. I’m sorry Tommy, the universe- you’re the only one who the egg couldn’t infect. It sent you back, stuck you in your old body when you died, and sent me to give you this.”

Techno couldn’t see, but if he had to guess, it was the book Karl had been clutching like a lifeline “It’s everything I know, everything I remember, which, honestly isn’t much. The timeline fraying...I can’t remember what really happened anymore. But that’s all true. You need it. You have to destroy the Egg Tommy.”

“No.” Tommy said, “No Karl-”

“I’m sorry.” Karl said, “I’m sorry Tommy, I wish it didn’t have to be you, I wish- I failed. This is my fault. I’m sorry. I don’t have time to explain anymore. I’m sorry.”

Tommy sounded near tears “Jacobs, you can’t fucking die, I still don’t understand.”

“I don’t have time to explain,” Karl said, and there was a pain in his voice. Technoblade wished he could see what was happening “Tommy I’m sorry. The book is what you need. The

book explains better than I can. I can't- I can't even think. I'm sorry Tommy."

"Fuck you." Tommy snapped "I can't go back. I can't. That place fucking ruined my life. Ruined my family. It got my brother killed, Karl. I can't go back. Even if I do how can I-"

"The book, Tommy." Karl pressed, "Use the book, that's all I have. I'm sorry. I'm sorry Tommy." Karl coughed and it sounded horrible "I'm sorry. I failed you. I failed everyone. You can't fail Tommy. You can't. Promise me you'll do this. "

"Fuck you, fuck you, Fuck you." Tommy snapped "Fuck you. I- can't. Fuck you."

"Please," Karl begged, and Techno was frozen in horror, unable to move, just listening to whatever insane conversation was happening. As some man, claiming to be a time-traveler, begged his brother to stop some sort of Egg "Please, Tommy."

There was a heavy moment of silence, before Tommy finally, quietly said "I promise, you little bitch."

"Thank you," Karl said, with a voice that sounded too much like that of a dying man. Techno had heard enough, promise be damned. Phil seemed to still be frozen in some sort of horror and shock, staring at the door., but Techno was just angry. He was going to demand answers from the cryptic time-traveler, despite the man apparently being pulled apart by time itself. Unfortunately, there was no one in the room but Tommy staring at a glowing book, and an empty chair when he opened the door.

Tommy wasn't crying, not really, but his shoulders shook as he stared down at the book in his hands.

"Tommy?" Techno said, "Where did he go? Where is he?"

"He's gone," Tommy said, almost blankly, still staring down at the glowing book. "He's gone and all I have is this stupid book and It's not even in fucking English."

Chapter End Notes

1) I am so tired I cannot form sentences. I do not know if anything in the last like, 2k words makes sense but I hope it does. I love you guys I'm sorry this isn't the best. Next chapter will be more my speed. I have no idea who to write Karl.

2) Everyone who guess Karl, good for you! You got it!

3) so, Phil knows, huh. What will he do?

4) Tubbo just chilled upstairs during all this, packing, because he thought Tommy and Phil were still fighting.

who's a heretic now?

Chapter Summary

Tommy and Phil have a heart to heart.

Chapter Notes

I ain't dead people. please enjoy!

Check out the awesome [fanart](#) that CranberryWoodz made!!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

As a child, Philza had always chosen flight, in the heat of the moment. That wasn't a surprise- he was an avian hybrid, with wings and wind in his very soul. His instinct was using his wings to propel himself up, up, up away from any trouble or danger, blow him, twisting with the freedom of the winds, escaping everything from conversations to mobs that he couldn't yet fight.

Then, he learned the art of war. He learned how to wield a sword and a bow like they were more limbs, almost as natural as the proud wings on his back. He forced himself into a man who does not flee who fights, in the heat of the moment, choosing to draw a sword when it comes to it.

Never, not once, not when Technoblade was overwhelmed during battle by pillagers, or when Wilbur nearly died at age 3 from fever, or when seven year old Tommy got lost in the mines, did Phil freeze. He never froze, always forcing himself to fight, or in now rare instances, taking flight, but he never froze.

But he was frozen, standing on the doorstep of his own home, words of a strange man, a dying man, rattling in his head. He was frozen, even as Techno pushed past him, to where Tommy was kneeling on the floor, staring at the glowing book the man- Karl- had given him. They were talking, but Phil felt like he was looking from the outside in, unable to do

anything but watch, as the conversation echoed in his head. And, not a fucking bit of it made sense.

“Tommy, I’m a time-traveler” Karl had said, and that sounded insane, insane enough that it had almost snapped Phil out of whatever trance he’d fallen in, but then Tommy had... accepted it. He hadn’t argued.

In fact, if Phil could bring himself to believe the words he’d heard, Tommy was a time-traveler too.

It didn’t make sense.

It couldn’t be true. Phil couldn’t believe it.

Because that would mean that what he’d heard was true. That there was a reason for the wariness and hatred in Tommy’s eyes whenever he looked at them. That would mean that all the things Tommy said, about him disowning Tommy, about something called Doomsday, about Tommy dying- Phil’s chest felt tight, restricted. It couldn’t be true.

But was it? Technoblade was on the floor, kneeling beside Tommy, who was staring at the book and Phil could tell their mouths were moving, tell that Tommy was talking, but he couldn’t hear what was being said. His ear still rang with words he couldn’t or perhaps wouldn’t allow himself to understand.

And Karl was gone, now, the couch empty, no trace of him beside the book Tommy was clutching like a lifeline.

“Tommy, what the fuck is going on, mate?” Phil heard himself ask, and Tommy slowly so slowly looked up at Phil. This time there was nothing behind his eyes, just exhaustion, pure exhaustion, and something like grief. He stepped into the house, pulling the door closed behind him. “Where did that man- Karl-go?”

“He’s gone,” Tommy repeated flatly. “I’m guessing you heard all that shit, from the look on your face. Karl fucking, I dunno, glitched out. Gone. Don’t suppose I’m lucky enough for that to happen. It’s never my time to die, huh?” There was a twist of something like amusement in those last words, like the punchline of a joke that was between Tommy and the universe, dark as it was.

Before Phil could even consider the implications of that statement, Technoblade was talking again, and though his voice was monotone, there was no mistaking the frustration that ran through it. Phil felt it too, frustration, fear, and confusion that he hated. Why was no one giving them a straight fucking answer? “Tommy, I think you owe both of us an explanation. A real explanation.”

“He’s right Tommy.” Phil said, hoping he sounded more confident, more secure than he felt, as if his world hadn’t shifted beneath him and he was tumbling, freefalling, without his wings to catch him “Whatever it is, whatever the fuck is going in, we need to know. We wanna help you mate.”

Tommy let out a laugh that was halfway bitter and halfway sad, and something in Philza that wasn’t completely swallowed by the anger ached, at just how old his son looked, behind his dull blue eyes. How hadn’t he noticed how dull they were?

Tommy just shook his head, as he slowly got to his feet, looking far too unsteady. “Don’t say that to me. Please don’t- I Can’t tell you. I-I can’t. I just.. I thought this was a second chance I thought I could never have to- fucking Karl, fuck time-travel.” Tommy was somewhere between angry and pleading. “I can’t do this right now. Please don’t make me. I don’t want to fucking- .”

“Tommy, come on.” Phil prodded, teetering on pleading, “Techno had been trying to help you- I want to help you. We can’t help you if you don’t tell us what the fuck is going on. ”

“I’ve spent hours talking to you kid.” Techno snapped “Tommy I gave you amour and time, and I don’t know what else you need from me, to prove that I do want to help.”

Tommy just shook his head as he backed his way toward the stairs, “See, the worst part is you believe that you want to help me. I’m not fucking falling for it again. You never cared

about me, not really.” It was almost like Tommy was talking to himself now, rather than them “You tricked me into thinking this was a family before, but it isn't. I don't need your help.”

And with that Tommy was up the steps, once again, leaving Phil and Technoblade standing in the living room. Technoblade could have caught him and Phil halfway expected him to, but when he turned to Technoblade his face was a perfect blank mask. But, that was his child, his eldest son, despite whatever Technoblade claimed, and there was anger, hurt, and something like fear in Technoblade's eyes.

“What the fuck.” Phil muttered because he really had no other words for what was happening.

“This is... so much worse than I thought.” Technoblade said quietly “I knew it was bad Phil, I knew... I didn't think it was this bad. Now...”

Technoblade cut himself off, clenching his jaw.

“Did you know about this?” Phil asked, quietly, unsure of whether or not he wanted to know the answer.

“I knew Tommy was from the future.” Technoblade admitted quietly “But he claimed it wasn't bad, he claimed he wanted to preserve the timeline. Or, at least he did up until about three hours ago. He died Phil. For real. Three times. Karl, or whoever, said it, but Tommy told me that himself, right before we got back. He said we celebrated, Phil. He said we celebrated his death- or at least he thought we would.”

Phil felt ill “What the fuck.”

“Yeah.” Technoblade agreed. And there was a beat of silence between them and Phil watched Technoblade flinch at seemingly nothing “Listen, Phil,” Technoblade said after a moment, and there was a note of strain in his voice. “I wanna talk to Tommy, but my Chat.. I don't know what I'm going to do if shits as bad as I think it is. I...I've got far, far better control than I used to, but I don't want to risk anything.”

Phil nodded “Do what you have to mate. Do you need me to do anything?” Tommy needed him too, sure, but if Technoblade lost control he could easily hurt himself or someone else, even if he didn’t mean to.

Something flashed in Technoblade’s eyes that Phil couldn’t quite read. “No, Tommy needs you more Phil. Go talk to him and fill me in later. I’ve got... a plan for getting’ this under control”

It wasn’t hard to locate Tommy, who had barricaded himself in the attic again, not when a confused Tubbo was staring up the ladder. “What was all that shouting about, down there?” Tubbo asked, “Is Tommy alright? Did someone break-in?”

“No, everything is fine, Tubbo,” Phil lied, despite nothing being fine at all. “Why don’t you go on back to Wilbur’s room yeah?”

Tubbo narrowed his eyes at Phil for a moment. “Tommy’s pretty angry at you, Phil. ... I dunno if he wants to talk to you.”

“Yeah, I don’t think he does much either.” Phil said, “You have any idea why, exactly?”

Tubbo shrugged “You all were the ones shouting down there. But Tommy thinks you don’t care about him. I mean, that isn’t true, really, you’re around way more than my guardian does!” Tubbo offered.

Phil offered a forced half-grin, trying his best to pretend that didn't feel like a punch in the gut. Tubbo’s guardian, who was named John, or something, was hardly fit to be called a parent. A pissed-off enderman would be a better parent. That’s why Tubbo was around so much.

“Thanks, Tubbo,” Phil said, ruffling the boy’s hair out of habit, despite the fact that he really wished Tubbo had said nothing at all. “Tommy.. You know how he’s been. I think we may finally get some answers.”

“Good.” Tubbo said “He needs to stop being such a secretive dickface.”

“I’ll be sure to tell him that,” Phil said quietly, allowing himself to focus on the familiar banter rather than the crisis he was about ten seconds away from having.

Tubbo just beamed and headed back into Tommy’s room.

Phil turned to find that the attic door was barricaded shut, and Phil wasn't going to bother to try and bust it open. So he went outside and slipped his wings out from under his cloak, and with a few beats found himself on the roof of the house. He had planned on trying the trap door onto the roof, and if Tommy had locked it, he’d break a window or something. He honestly hadn’t thought it through that far.

But, to his surprise, Tommy was sitting on the top on the roof, wedged by the chimney, with the book glowing faintly in his lap, staring out into the woods.

“Toms?” Phil said as he landed on the roof, drawing his wings up against him. It was cold, and Tommy was only partially dressed for it. Phil was only better off because his wings provided a slight buffet to the wind.

Tommy didn’t look at him, but Phil knew that Tommy knew he was there, because Tommy flinched at the words.

“Tommy, mate, talk to me,” Phil said as he made his way to sit by Tommy. The stars were bright, for once, and they were high enough above the trees that they could be seen without issue. The bright full moon cast a pale pallor across Tommy's face, highlighting the dark bags under his eyes. “We’re worried.”

“Yeah,” Tommy said with a snort “I don’t need you to worry about me, or shit like that okay? I’m a big man, Phil. I haven’t needed to be worried about in a long fucking time.”

That wasn’t true. Phil generally considered himself a lax parent. As long as his kids were safe from permanent (or debilitating) bodily harm, Phil generally let them do what they wanted without being too worried. He had restricted explosives access, because Tubbo was a menace, especially when paired with Wilbur, or ended forbid Tommy and Wilbur, and weapons access because Tommy really didn’t need a sword that wasn’t a training sword (or hadn’t, since he’d used the real ones so little). But otherwise, his kids had always had free roam of the mines, mountains, and forest that surrounded their home.

That didn’t mean he couldn’t worry about his kids and Tubbo who was half his kid anyway. He always worried, about at least one of them, for as much as he wanted to grab Tommy by the shoulders and just shake some sense into him, shake some answers out of him, that would be counterproductive, because it was Tommy, and nothing ever easy with that fucking child.

“Can you at least tell me about the future? What happened Tommy?” Phil pressed. “Just, what happened? Are you really...” He wanted to ask more specific questions, but Phil couldn’t quite find them. All he could wonder is, what happened? What made his youngest kid look so damn tired?

(if that Karl figure was to be believed, then it was perhaps Phil himself. Phil didn’t like that thought)

Phil was almost certain he was going to be met with another blustering wall of excuses or half manic insults and accusations thrown his way, but instead, Tommy took a deep breath. “Fine. I’ll tell you, but just the basics. I don’t want to get into all the shit. It isn’t important.” he shot Phil a withering look “And yes, I’m from the fucking future. I didn’t just make shit up, or watch a man get erased in front of me for nothing.”

Phil had a feeling that that was very much untrue and that Phil would certainly want to get into the deep shit, but he nodded his agreement, and Tommy took that as an invitation to start rambling.

“Well, long, long story short, Wilbur, Tubbo, and I all left this server about.. Two months from now originally. Wil went off on his own for a bit, after a few months. Didn’t hear shit

from him after that. Tubbo and I did a few competitions, and eventually, we got an invite to an SMP. I don't even think it's been created yet. We decided to join, cause why not. About a week later, Wilbur showed up, with-" Tommy paled considerably, even in the dim light, and looked vaguely ill.

"Fundy, oh shit. Fuck, I didn't even think- fucking time travel. " Tommy ran a hand through his messy blond hair, and barked a hysterical laugh "I'm such a shitty- how could I forget? I was gonna- well, that doesn't matter now." Tommy seemed to be talking to himself again, more so than Phil.

"Who the fuck is Fundy?" Phil found himself asking because he'd never heard that name before, and Tommy seems obviously upset at whatever realization he had just had.

"Well, he isn't born, yet," Tommy said, and gave Phil a half-bitter, half-manic smile "but how do you feel about being a grandfather, Phil?"

It felt like the air had been sucked from Phil's lungs. He gaped for a moment, before finally whispering "Wilbur has a *kid* ?"

"Will have. I guess." Tommy corrected with a shrug. "Dunno if Fundy is actually Wilbur's kid or not, biologically, but Fundy called him dad. Also, ages really fuckin' weird, or something. I dunno. I barely saw the guy after... well.. Doesn't it matter? He's a fox hybrid of some kind. I always forget that I'm technically older than him."

A grandchild. Wilbur having a son, a hybrid son. He would be a grandfather. Might be a grandfather. Wilbur being a dad, having a child- he wanted to say that was unimaginable but... But hadn't Wilbur already been a dad to Tommy? Hadn't he already spent hours cooking and caring for Tommy and Tubbo when Phil couldn't ? But a child, an actual child....

Tommy watched as Phil practically had a mental breakdown as the information sank in for Phil. And wasn't that hilarious? Phil had hardly cared for Fundy, in the future once they had finally met. Phil hadn't cared for anyone but Technoblade, the only son who hadn't been a disappointment, even if he was the first to reject Phil's fatherhood. He thought they were all

traitors, even from the start, even if he hadn't said it. Phil was still angry with them, probably, and then Wilbur had died because Tommy had antagonized Dream. Because Tommy couldn't keep his mouth shut. Because Tommy- Tommy derailed that train of thought. Fundy. God, was it fucked that Tommy had almost forgotten him? That Tommy hadn't even considered that Fundy wouldn't exist if he had succeeded in stopping Wilbur? Guilt twisted in his gut. Tommy was just a selfish bastard, wasn't he? But, after everything, maybe Fundy would have been better off not existing if life was going to deal Tommy's nephew a similar hand this time.

Fundy had hated his father, in the end. And as much as Tommy loved Wilbur, desperately missed him, Fundy had fallen victim to the whims of Wilbur's insanity too and Tommy could bear little fault for Fundy's conflicting feelings about his dad. They all had those feelings, especially those that spent time in Pogtopia. Exactly maybe Technoblade who didn't seem to care, who denied that Wilbur was his twin.

It was understandable why Tubbo and Fundy had thrown Phil in house arrest, even if it had fucked them over in the long run. Tommy hadn't considered Fundy family in a long time- they had never been close, only knowing each other as brothers in arms, rather than a real family, before Fundy was on Schlatt's side and everything went to hell.

Tommy allowed him a moment to process before he moved on because Tommy was ready to just get that shit out if it had to be said.

"Anyway, a bunch of shit goes down, there are a couple wars, Wilbur founds a country because the admin was a bastard, we get exiled, Wil blows L'Manburg- the country- up, Tubbo becomes president. We go through some more shit, L'Manburg gets blown up again, uh, that was the Doomsday Karl talked about. Uh, some other stuff happened, this creepy-ass Egg showed up and apparently started possessing people, and then I died. Pretty sure my death was... at least partially an accident. Someone set me up to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, and kaboom. Ended up in the past or some shit. No idea why, even with Karl's shitty ass explanation. That's basically what happened, in the future. Apparently, I'm supposed to stop the Egg and maybe prevent some of the other shit too, I don't know. I don't even know where that came from, or if a war caused it, shit this is confusing. Damn it all "

"Holy hell Tommy." Phil breathed, sounding far too shocked. This Phil didn't know. This Phil had no way or knowing. That didn't make it any easier. It didn't fix the fact that Phil had done those things. Would do those things, probably. That the care he showed now would only hurt more later, when he inevitably chose violence, chose *Techno*, chose to leave again. Technoblade, who had stormed out the door only moments after Tommy had reached the

roof, and was already one a horse, gone over the nearest mountain.. “Why the hell do you all agree to join a war server?”

Tommy could hear the admonishment in his tone, an unsaid ‘I thought I taught you better’, in the air. Tommy let out a bitter laugh because Phil had always warned against them. Never spoke of them, really, just warned against them. And ironic isn't it, that Tommy hadn't set out for that.

“Not on purpose, dickhead.” Tommy snapped, because who the fuck did that, besides Technoblade, or other madmen, thirsting for blood and violence alone “It wasn't a war server. It was a fucking SMP. There weren't supposed to be any wars, but shit got out of hand.”

“Why didn't Wilbur pull you all out of there?”

Wilbur. Phil was blaming Wilbur for this? Of course. It wasn't always Wilbur's fault, it was Tommy's fault if anything. He'd asked Dream to whitelist Wilbur, he'd encouraged it. Tommy was the one that caused problems first. Wilbur had done his best to help them. Wilbur had been there.

“Leave Wilbur the fuck alone, Philza” Wilbur hadn't always been right, but he'd almost always been there, at least in the beginning. He'd at least tried when Phil had just given up. Hadn't cared. “It wasn't that easy, to ‘just leave’ that SMP. He did the best he could, in the situation. The admin is a fucking piece of work, especially after Wilbur started challenging the shit he did and started L'Manburg. He was trying to protect us. He didn't mean to start the first war Besides, you can't say a fucking word anyway Phil. You don't get to comment on what Wilbur should've done.” His voice wavered, but Tommy was cried out. There couldn't be anything left. Not tonight.

“What do you mean?”

“I mean, I had to watch Wilbur fall apart, after months of war and then exile from the country we sacrificed everything gore, where we barely scraped by in a fucking ravine. I gave up two lives, fighting beside him, and then he destroyed the country because he believed it couldn't be saved. Because he went crazy and I couldn't help him.. You ignored my messages, you only came when Techno finally summoned you, and probably only then because he finally realized Wilbur wasn't well. But you showed up two weeks too late, and Wilbur begged you

to kill him. And you did. You barely even hesitated, Phil. You just...looked at him, and hardly protested. I'd spent months keeping him alive and you just, let him die? I watched you kill him."

Phil reeled back like Tommy had hit him. And Tommy wished it made him happy, that there was any sort of perverse pleasure he felt making Phil hurt, making Phil know that in the end, *he'd* killed Wilbur, but he didn't. He couldn't even feel happy about it, that Phil was hurting like he'd hurt Tummy, because this Phil hadn't done that yet, not most of it. He hadn't killed Wilbur. His eyes shone with genuine hurt and concern and somehow that was worse. Fuck emotions. Tommy didn't know what he felt. It was too much, It wasn't enough. He kept talking, because why stop now? Phil needed to understand, needed to know why Tommy couldn't trust him. Tommy looked away.

"And before his blood had even dried on his sword, the diamond one? You disowned me. Told me that I was always Wilbur's kid anyway. I think you blamed me for Wilbur going crazy. And maybe it is my fault. I don't fucking know!" Tommy snapped, staring straight ahead, into the night, unable to even look at Phil, who was probably somewhere between angry and unbearably understanding, like he'd been in the last few weeks. "Wilbur fucked up, but at least he was trying. You just gave up after that and always took Techno's side."

"And I was hoping to prevent that." Tommy continued "I was hoping that I would never have to go to that stupid server, never have to face the chance of those stupid wars, or that absolute bastard Admin, or exile, and even if you still fucked off and Techno stayed away, I would have been happy enough, keeping Wilbur alive, and Tubbo from losing two lives. But apparently, Karl and the Universe or some shit like that want me to fight the stupid Egg and a book that apparently contains the answers, that isn't even written in English!" Tommy stared down at the stupid book and slammed it down onto the roof beside him, halfway wishing he could just throw it off and never see it again.

Then Tommy was crying again, like some sort of little bitch, even when he thought that all his tears were gone. His chest was tight and his lungs burned, from the cold and because he'd been practically shouting at the end, as a sob cut off his rant. He'd already fucked up, he'd pissed Technoblade off, and he'd left. Wilbur hadn't even bothered to say goodbye, and Phil would likely hate him, after screaming at him like this. That would leave tubbo and tUbbο alone. And how could Tommy drag Tubbo back? How could he leave him behind?

And then, there were arms around him. Tommy's instincts screamed, for a moment, that Dream had him, that someone was going to kill him, that he needed to get out, but then warm wings wrapped around behind him, shielding him from the wind. Phil. Phil was hugging him,

pulling him close and his face was pressed against a familiar chest. Tommy wanted to pull away, on principle, because he didn't want Phil's pity, or his hugs, or any of that shit, but damn it, he couldn't bring himself to tear away.

"I'm sorry," Phil whispered, and it sounded like Phil was crying too, with his face buried against the top of Tommy's head. His warm breath tickled the back of Tommy's neck, as Tommy sobbed into Phil's chest. Ender, Tommy would regret it, kate. He always regretted it, but for now, he couldn't help it. "I'm so sorry, Toms. That won't happen again. I-I won't let any of that happen again. I swear it. I'm so sorry"

The conviction in Phil's voice somehow made Tommy cry harder, almost silently, as his chest ached for air. Phil couldn't promise that not really, and Tommy couldn't trust that, but...

Phil's hug was warm, it was soft. It wasn't tinged with the smell of gunpowder or blood, desperate in the way you pull someone in after they nearly died, or after you nearly died. It was a real hug and a hug from his Dad, whose wings were whole, and who still cared.

And there would be more questions, Tommy knew and answers that none of them would like. Techno and Wilbur were still awol, and Tubbo would be in danger, and Tommy was still stuck with the fact he would have to return to the SMP. That he would have to face Dream, and that in the end, it would probably fall to shit.

But wrapped in Phil's wings, like a little kid, while his father's shirt absorbed his tears and his voice was still soft, Tommy could almost let himself believe that maybe it wouldn't.

Chapter End Notes

1) hey I ain't dead. Sorry, gang! moving on. This chapter is to, an extent, the end of Tommy's big secret-keeping angst arc. There are a few loose ends to tie up, of course, and this didn't solve everything by any means, but the focus will shift more to the plot, and to the book plot specifically (which, I'm loving the theories you guys are giving me about that!)

2)hey, does this count as comfort? A single hug? See! this fic has comfort just like I promised!

3) The response to the last chapter was overwhelming in the best way possible. You guys absolutely rock and I say this every time but I love you all and your support. SO many of your comments made me laugh, or smile,(even if it was about you crying haha) and gosh I've never had this kind of support. Y'all are gonna give a girl a complex if you keep being so nice.

4) a link to my [tumblr](#). You do not have to visit, but I do exist there.

5)this was, as always, edited by Grammarly, and a severely sleep-deprived author. Even if it isn't two am this time! I am just always sleep-deprived, as a rule of thumb. Anywho, this was not important I just wanted 5 points ngl. so yeah. I really hope this lived up to expectations, even it wasn't quite as exciting as last chapter.

i wish you could see the wicked truth

Chapter Summary

A few conversations, that ultimately don't lead to enough.

Chapter Notes

enjoy! only CW might be the same level of self-hatred from Tommy and Techno we've seen the whole time. Mostly tOmmy here. Nothing overt but just the same level of loathing.(obligatory I don't know Spanish, so the two lines in here are 100% google translate.)

Hope you guys like it!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Technoblade arrived home mid-morning. The sun was not shining, but it was still obvious based on the light of the sky. When he came in, he found Phil outside, sitting on the roof of the stable. He did not speak to Technoblade, who in return did not speak either. He simply tied up the horse, who was exhausted from the hours of hard riding. Technoblade simply hauled himself onto the roof, ignoring the way that dried blood flaked off of his white shirt.

“It’s not mine,” Technoblade said gruffly, as he settled beside Phil, answering a question that Phil hadn’t even bothered to ask yet. He would’ve probably, not because he thought it was Technoblade’s but it was an old song and dance. Techno was, honestly, covered, in, well, a concerning amount of blood. Even he could admit that it looked a little bad like he’d been stabbed. Which, there was stabbing involved. Multiple stabbings, but that wasn’t really the concern. “I took care of a few power-hungry, lazy, idiots for ya.”

Those admin-blood bastards could rot, for all he cared. They were corrupt and had been for years. Phil scared them enough they left them alone, but Technoblade needed a target, and they’d had it coming. He’d left the real admin alive- bloody and broken- but alive. His friends hadn’t been so lucky. Technoblade did not have admin blood but he was more than willing to spill it.

Phil still hadn't answered him- hadn't even really looked at him- bucket hat pulled low, and wings wrapped around himself. His head was bowed like he was praying, or perhaps like he'd been crying. Technoblade didn't like that. Phil was supposed to be the strong one, here- they were both supposed to be the ones that didn't cry so that the other didn't have to deal with it. Wilbur cried. Tommy cried. Phil dealt with it. Technoblade hadn't actually cried since he was 14. This was not his area of expertise, despite how often Tommy had cried on him.

But Phil looked bad. Like, worryingly bad. "Is Tommy alright? Did you get him to talk?" Technoblade asked, trying to ignore the concern that twisted at him. Because okay, sue him. Techno was a little concerned. He couldn't help that Chat had gotten attached to Tommy, and that rubbed off on him a little but.

Technosoft.

They're brothers, your honor .

Big brother pog.

"Wilbur's dead." Phil croaked, and his voice was little more than a hoarse whisper and Technoblade froze For a moment even the voices went quiet and Technoblade's heart stuttered in his chest, as the world tilted sideways for a split second. Technoblade felt something almost like fear shoot through him, as he managed to draw in a sharp breath.

"What?" he asked flatly because Wilbur couldn't be dead. That bastard was too stubborn to die, and he'd been fine just days ago. And even if Wilbur hated him and Technoblade couldn't stand him, he really didn't want-

"Not now, but in the future. Tommy said he lost all his canon lives, and that-" Phil's voice cracked, and shook with something like rage and grief "And that I took his last life. Wilbur begged me to kill him, apparently and I did. I killed my son."

Pihl's wing shook slightly, trembling, just like Phil's entire body and Technoblade... what could he say to that? What could he do but slump in relief because Wilbur wasn't dead, not yet, and he was still safe. It was horrible but far, far better than he feared. He tried to imagine Phil, *Philza* , holding a sword over Wilbur's body, stabbing his son, stabbing Wilbur, taking his life and that didn't make sense. He'd seen Phil kill, many, many times. He wasn't

called the Angel of Death for no reason, but never, never had Phil raised a sword at any of them, not even at Techno with the threat of actual harm. He couldn't comprehend it.

"And, then apparently, I disowned Tommy. I killed his older brother, who was apparently a better parent than I am, then I disowned him." Phil was guilty. Technoblade could hear the guilt dripping from every word and grief for something that hadn't passed. Phil was angry, so angry, and Technoblade knew Phil blamed himself entirely. Technoblade had heard that guilt before, when he was a kid, and struggling with the voices for the first time.

"Are you sure Tommy wasn't just confused?" Technoblade asked because Phil would never do that. Phil would never, ever do that. He had seen Phil kill, sure, but Wilbur was his son, Wilbur was... Wilbur. Phil would never kill him. He would never disown Tommy either. They were his sons. He cared about them because they were good. They were smart and weren't nearly as fucked up as Technoblade. They weren't a weapon dressed like a person, who was tolerated for his usefulness, or out of some sense of loyalty, bound by the blood that they had spilled together. He trusted Philze, but Philza.. He couldn't be Phil's son. But the other two were.

"You didn't see him Tech." Phil insisted "Tommy was... er Tommy was *distraught*. He was angry. He was grieving. He was telling the truth. You know the gremlin still can't lie for shit."

Technoblade snorted a laugh at the end because Phil was right. Tommy wasn't a good liar at all. But what did Technoblade say to Phil, what do you say when you find out your ~~father~~ ~~mentor~~ friend killed your ~~twin friend~~ his son and disowned the other one in a future that hadn't happened? Technoblade sure didn't know, and Chat was absolutely useless.

Dadza?

Killza? Killza.

Damn, that's harsh.

Killza ooh nice!

Killza

Deadbur?

Blood for the blood god

Killza

Killza

Is Tommy telling the truth?

Killza

Why would Tommy lie, Techno, I know you can hear me.

E

Killza

Killza

We aren't doing E were doing Killza

Deadbur

Killza

Killza

No Deadbur! Killza!

Blood Blood Blood

Killza

Killza

Killza

Shut up about the blood for once jfc

Killza

Killza

Very helpful, Chat. Thanks.

“You haven’t done it yet, Phil” is what Technoblade finally settled on. “Just.. don’t do it this time. Tommy plans on changing stuff, so don’t worry about it. You won’t let it happen this time.”

“But how can I know that, Techno?” Phil asked, voice wavering, “How can I make sure that I don’t fuck up again since apparently, I did it so easily the first time.”

“We don’t know if it was easy, Phil.” Techno tried, gently. Because he knew. It would never be easy for Phil, would it? Phil couldn’t do it easily. “We don’t know the whole story, we don’t know what you were thinkin’-”

“It doesn’t matter what I was thinking Technoblade,” Phil said firmly, finally lifting his head so that sad blue eyes met Techno’s red. “It doesn’t matter. I still killed my son. I disowned the other. I can’t do that again. I won’t.”

“Alright,” Tehcnoblade said. There was nothing to say besides that really. Phil was right- it probably wasn’t great, that he’d killed Wilbur and disowned Tommy. Techno hadn’t heard his own name, and he was almost scared to ask, based on what Tommy told him. But Technoblade... Well, he wouldn’t let it happen. If not for Tommy’s sake, or even Wilbur’s for Phil’s. Phil didn’t deserve to carry this grief, of something he hadn’t even done. Not that it was Tommy’s fault, for being upset. Techno had no idea how, if that was true, Tommy had even stood to be in the same room as Phil. “Well, why don’t you fill me in on what Tommy told you and we’ll go from there. I don’t plan on letting that kid do any destroyin’ alone if I heard that right about some egg.”

Technoblade had also made a promise. He said he wouldn’t let him, whoever that may be, (was it Phil? Or someone else?) get Tommy and he intended to keep it.

Something akin to a smile flicked over Phil’s face, a hint of amusement danced in his tone for the first time in the conversation. “Well, apparently Wilbur has a son.”

“ *What?!* ”

“So you’re really from the future,” Tubbo asked, staring up at Tommy, who was far more nervous than he would like to admit. He hadn’t decided to tell Tubbo until his friend had busted in, a few minutes ago, already packed and ready to set off after Wilbur,

“Yeah.” Tommy snapped, coming off a little more harsh than he meant to, though Tubbo was used to it. “Don’t make a big fuss, it’s not a big fucking deal-”

“Not a big deal?” Tubbo exclaimed, shooting to his feet. “Tommy that’s so fucking cool! You’re from the future! You can tell us who is going to win Hypixel fights! We can get rich! We’ll be unstoppable!”

Tommy blinked. “Tubbo, what? No! We aren’t going to fucking bet on Hypixel fights and shit.”

“Why not? Tommy, we could buy our own server! We could have a huge house! And all sorts of cool shit!” Tubbo exclaimed. “Or you would know all the places to find diamonds and God apples and shit! We can have fireworks!”

Tommy couldn’t help but laugh, at the sheer excitement on Tubbo’s face, and all his ridiculous ideas, even if that was so painfully far from the future that they’d gotten the first time around, and so far this trip around wasn’t looking much better. “Tubbo, what the fuck.” Tommy said “no, I don’t know any of that shit. I didn’t memorize Hypixel winners, dickhead.”

Tubbo immediately flopped onto Tommy’s bed with a groan. “Ugh, that’s lame as shit. Why didn’t you do that, Tommy?”

“I was busy Tubbo,” Tommy chided because that was technically true- they’d been so busy once they’d joined the SMP that there was no chance to even leave the server. “Besides, I told you, I didn’t mean to time travel. I didn’t exactly have time to prepare for this.”

“Still, lame. What were we even doing, if you weren’t competing in Hypixel.” Tubbo asked, popping up “Did we at least become rich, or do awesome shit? Don’t tell me we still live here!”

Tommy couldn’t help but laugh, even if it was almost painful to see Tubbo so... trusting. He wasn’t the guarded, cold, and honestly fucking tired man Tommy was used to. Tommy wasn’t going to let that change. He wouldn’t let Tubbo lose a life in the final control room or on that

stage at Technoblade and Schlatt's hands. Tommy's smile fell a little, and he tried to keep the laugh in his voice "Yeah, we definitely did some awesome shit!" Tommy said. "I was especially pog, and you, well-"

"Hey!" Tubbo cried in mock offense, smacking Tommy's leg "I'm cooler than you, dickhead!"

"Nah, not even close!" Tommy said, "I'm far cooler than you Big-T!"

"No, you aren't!" Tubbo whined, "You're lying to me, Tommy, tell me about the future."

"Fine," Tommy said dramatically, ignoring the way his stomach twisted. He could probably sugarcoat it enough to satisfy Tubbo, for now at least. "Fine, I suppose. So, we actually did Hypixel for a bit, just some minor stuff, nothing for any real money, then we got whitelisted to another server, called the Dream SMP."

"Dream?" Tubbo asked, perking up, "I think I've heard of him, from the few bits of news. I think he's starting in the Hypixel circuits!"

Tommy barely suppressed a flinch, though if Tubbo's face was anything to go by he might not have actually hidden all that well. Great. "Yeah!" Tommy said, with forced cheer "Dream made an SMP, and we got whitelisted! We joined, and Wilbur joined not long after us."

"Sounds boring." Tubbo whines "That doesn't sound cool. Unless we were the richest people on the server?"

Tommy barked a laugh. Tubbo, in Snowchester, while not the richest, was certainly well off. Tommy lived in a fucking dirt hut.

"Not quite." Tommy said "But we did do some cool shit! You, uh, built nukes! And I-

What had Tommy done, really? Besides start wars, and be Wilbur's right-hand man, what had Tommy done? "I built a hotel!" Tommy said, which, okay, the hotel wasn't done- it would never be done, actually, but it was still cool. And okay, Tommy didn't really like the stupid fucking nukes, because that had ended up killing him. And even if he didn't blame Tubbo in the slightest (which he did not, that was all on Niki and probably jack), it wasn't something he really wanted to talk about thank you very much. But, the way Tubbo's eyes lit up, with something akin to manic glee, well it was worth just a bit of discomfort.

"NUKES!" Tubbo practically screeched "That's so cool! How did I do it?"

"No fucking clue," Tommy admitted with a laugh "You and Jack Manifold made them, I think, but I have no idea if Jack actually did the work or was just trying to take credit like the pussy he is. I dunno."

Tommy and Jack had been friends once, but Tommy wasn't stupid. He knew how Jack felt about him and, well, Tommy had taken one of his lives, even if the bastard had somehow managed to climb out of hell. He couldn't entirely fault Jack for hating him. He hadn't really suspected Niki though, not as much. He hadn't meant to let them kill him; justified as it may be. Maybe that was selfish.

"Cool." Tubbo breathed. "That's so cool I wanna make nukes now!"

"Let's hold off on that big man," Tommy said, feeling something cold tighten in his gut. Tommy tight he nukes were cool- and they really were he didn't particularly want to risk getting well, fucking bombed again. "That is almost two years from now, we don't have the shit for it here."

"Lame," Tubbo complained again and a moment of silence fell between them. "So, are we still going after Wilbur? Is that what happened last night?"

Tommy grimaced "Well, you see, the future as cool as it was, had some... not so fun shit." Tommy hedged because that might be an understatement if he was being honest "And uh, I got a message from someone from the future who is apparently was a real time-traveler, not like me, and he needs me to go stop this weird-ass Egg that was doing shit on the server."

“Egg?” Tubbo said, with a furrowed brow “That sounds weird.”

“Yeah.” Tommy agreed. “It does mind control and shit. Didn’t affect me though- I’m too much of a big man!”

“Liar” Tubbo accused lightly “That sounds like bullshit.”

“It’s not! I’m not fucking with you!” Tommy said with a scowl “Fuck off. His name was Karl and he apparently got erased from existence, or some shit, because of the changing timeline. I dunno. It was weird.”

“That sounds even more fake,” Tubbo said, suspiciously

“You can ask Phil he’ll back me up!” Tommy defended, and this time it was probably true. Technoblade had been there too, but Tommy had noticed Techno wasn’t home this morning, and it definitely didn’t hurt that Techno had already fucked off again after Tommy had once again fucked up. “It was weird as fuck. But we do need to find Wilbur, but I don’t think Phil is going to let me go off alone now.”

Besides, Phil could be useful. He was a good fucking fighter and right now if the night before was any indication, Phil seemed to actually care about him- at least a little anyway. And maybe it’s just because Phil felt bad about what he did to Wilbur (even if he hadn’t done it yet), and because he still didn’t know about Tommy’s betrayal (Tommy still felt the guilt and anger, about that, both at himself and them. Those bitter words and the horrifying destruction that followed- it stuck in his throat, and hadn’t been able to get it out) but Tommy honestly would use it.

For as long as it lasted, Tommy would take the help- it would be useful, especially if Phil could translate the book. Phil knew lots of things, and whatever language was in that book could certainly be one of them.

“But anyway, yeah we’re still going after Wilbur at some point. Phil will probably just come with us when we do. Or maybe he won’t. I dunno.” Tommy said with a frown. “Besides, I think... there are a few things that Wilbur needs to do on his own first.” That was Fundy,

namely. Tommy didn't know much about Fundy's... Birth and he had absolutely no fucking need to, but all Tommy knew about his mom is that her name was Sally and that she was dead.

Tommy really did want Fundy to exist in this timeline and still couldn't believe he hadn't even considered that his meddling could just erase someone from existing. His own nephew. Damn Tommy *was* just selfish.

Unfortunately, Tommy had no fucking idea when Fundy would be born this time, or if he even would be. Tommy could only hope and give Wilbur some time since he knew next to nothing to even begin pointing his brother in the right direction. As much as Tommy desperately, desperately wanted Wilbur by his side, where Tommy could make sure he didn't fucking spiral again, it might mess things up too much. That was one timeline he would do his best to preserve for now.

"But we may be leaving this server anyway." Tommy said, "I can't fucking stand to stay here much longer, even if we have to ditch Phil. We'll get out of here soon enough."

Tommy was in the middle of telling Tubbo about some of the tamer points of the Pet Wars when his busted door creaked open and Technoblade stuck his head in. "Phil wants to look at that book if you two are done with your little sleepover."

Wait. Technoblade? Hadn't he left? Tommy was certain he'd seen Technoblade ride off the night before, decked out in full armour, only a few minutes after Tommy's outburst. Tommy was certain that Techno had been [pissed about Tommy basically breaking his promise after, admittedly, Techno had been good to him again. But Technoblade was standing in his door frame and Tommy couldn't read any anger in his tone.

"I thought you fucking left?" Tommy blurted "And why the fuck are you covered in blood?" Technoblade was rather bloody, even his face had a small splatter that it looked like Techno hadn't bothered to wipe away. What the fuck?

Technoblade's brow furrowed "What? No. I.. took care of a problem and came back. I'm goin' to change. You two go on down. I think there's some food ready if you want to eat an early lunch."

That didn't really answer Tommy's question, but Techno had already ducked out of the room, and Tommy could only glare and mutter "Vague motherfucker."

"I think he might've caused problems, rather than solve them," Tubbo said, squinting at the door where Technoblade had been standing.

Tommy snorted "That man causes problems on purpose. Let's go downstairs. Karl- the time-traveler- gave me some book that said it had answers, but I can't fucking read it. Hopefully, Phil can."

"So, Karl gave me this stupid book," Tommy said, putting the book down on the table where Phil and Tubbo were sitting. Technoblade was halfway down the steps and Tommy was certain that he could what him, even if he didn't have his fucking suer hybrid hearing. "And it isn't written in English, or even Spanish which is such bullshit. You two know lots of shit. Can you read it?"

"Can you even speak Spanish, Tommy?" Technoblade asked dryly as he entered the kitchen, and Tommy took personal offense to the skepticism in his tone. He had many talents,

"Absolutely." Tommy snapped "I had a friend who spoke Spanish, and I picked a bunch of stuff up from him!" Of course, he hadn't learned too much, since Mexican Dream had just fucking died after a day, but Tommy was pretty sure he'd picked up a few things.

"Uh huh." Technoblade said "Eres un pequeño mocoso molesto que no tiene idea de lo que estoy diciendo, right?"

Okay, so maybe Tommy *didn't* know that much Spanish. Maybe it was just the curse words that Quackity tended to shout loudly and frequently during the Manburg and Pogtopia war, and the ones that Mexican Dream had taught him with a sly grin that day in exile. "Yes, absolutely." Tommy agreed regardless of whatever he was agreeing to.

Technoblade snorted. “Yeah that’s what I thought, you have no idea what I said.”

“Not true!” Tommy protested, “I just... don’t exactly know what you were saying Hijo de puta”

“Of course those are the words you would know,” Techno grumbled, rolling his eyes. “Who taught you that?”

“That’s enough boys, let’s see the book,” Phil said, grabbing the book, which was really nothing more than a notebook, leather-bound, with a long piece of twine tied tightly around it. It looked like some pages, in the back, had either been ripped out of another and stuck in. It was glowing, meaning that it was, in some fashion, vaguely enchanted. Phil gently unwound the twine and the book fell out, and Phil peered down at it, as Techno leaned over Phil’s shoulder.

Phil looked like shit, in Tommy’s opinion. Dark bags hung under his eyes and his shoulders were slumped. He probably hadn’t slept after he’d forced Tommy down into his bedroom. Probably torn up over Wilbur’s death, that hadn’t happened yet.

“Enchantin’ table,” Tehcnobalde said gruffly, his face twisting into a frown. “I recognize it, but I can't read it.”

“I can recognize a few words,” Phil said, squinting down at the book, with a frown twisting his face “But not nearly enough to decipher this.”

Techno grimaced “Who writes in enchantin’ table? What a show-off!”

“Techno don’t you speak like three languages?” Tommy accused, because really? Technoblade wore a cape. AND a crown, how the hell was he going to call literally anyone else a show-off?

“It’s five, and I speak *useful* languages,” Technoblade said with a sniff “English, Piglish, and Villager. I’m passable in Spanish and Greek.”

“Why the fuck would you think that Greek is useful!” Tommy asked “Greek is a made-up language! Enchanting table was at least a real language once!”

“It’s a skill!” Technoblade insisted “It’s useful for writin’ coded messages!”

“What, that no one else can read? Greek, what a bitch language.” Tommy argued, throwing up his hands “It’s just made up from all those stupid stories you like!”

“Oh yeah, and what, You speak English and like two words of Spanish?” Technoblade shot back

“Fuck you, I speak English and Villager fluently, for your information.” Tommy said, crossing his arms “And I do know a few Spanish words.”

“Only the curse words!” Technoblade said, “That doesn’t even count!”

“I think it counts” Tubbo chimed in.

“Thank you Tubbo,” Tommy said, “He agrees.” Tommy gestured widely at Tubbo.

“Not it doesn’t,” Techno said flatly, then narrowed his eyes “And since when can you speak villager?”

“The future, dickface.” Tommy said rolling his eyes “Duh”

“Guys, come on.” Phil admonished. They both fell quiet, but Tommy shot Techno a glare as the older man took a seat at the table next to Phil. Techno merely returned it with a quirked eyebrow. “The other languages you speak don’t matter much, cause none of us speak enchanting table unless you’re holding out on us Tubbo.” Phil cast a wry grin at Tubbo, who just shrugged.

“Sorry, can’t speak that, but I can speak piglatin!” Tubbo offered a bright smile, and Tommy couldn’t help but snort. Tubbo, even at this point, could speak fluent Villager and a fair bit of a few others- he’d always picked up spoken language way faster than written versions- but Phil probably had no idea.

“Thanks, Tubbo, we’ll keep.... it in mind, mate.” Phil said before turning his attention to the book with a frown.

“No problem.” Tubbo agreed, flashing a sly grin at Tommy and Tommy stifled a laugh. Techno rolled his eyes.

“Yeah. There’s no way I’m going to be able to decipher this.” Phil said apologetically. “I just don’t know enough.”

“So none of us can read the damn book. Great.” Tommy said, finally collapsing into one of the kitchen chairs with a groan. That was just his luck. Of course.

“I’m sorry mate,” Phil said apologetically, “Everything I’ve ever seen is pretty well completely translated.”

Tommy’s shoulders slumped of course it couldn’t be that easy. Of course not. Damn Karl and his stupid book in a strange language. Why couldn’t he write in English? Or Villager. Or even Techno’s stupid Greek.

“So what now? I need to know what that fucking book says.” Tommy buried his face in his hands.

“Do you really have to go fight the egg?” Techno asked neutrally “I know you promised that guy but he’s dead. You don’t have to do this”

Tommy opened his mouth to tell Techno to fuck off, bit hesitated

Did he really have to do this? He’d been given a shit hand by the universe over and over again. What was stopping him from just... not joining the SMP. Letting that server go to hell. What would stop him from just preventing Wilbur from joining and calling it a day?

But.... Karl had been a part of L’Manburg, even if only for a little while, even if he’d been on Manburg’s side for a while, and he’d always been nothing but nice. Even by his association with Sapnap and Quackity, Karl just seemed... genuine. He didn’t lie, he didn’t bullshit, he just told the truth.

And Tommy, well, he wasn't the smartest guy, he knew that, but he had a pretty fucking good idea of when someone was lying. Of when someone was manipulating him. Karl had apologized and genuinely seemed sorry. He was genuinely concerned about the egg.

Tommy didn’t hold much love in his heart for Bad or any of his crew, but he didn’t hate them either. And it was growing everywhere ugly and doing ender knows what else.

“I at least need to see what’s in the fucking book. Tommy said finally. “I promised him I’d take the book. I need to know what it says. Then, we’ll see.”

“I want to go see this Egg.” Tubbo chimed in “I want to blow it up!”

Technoblade studied him for a moment, ignoring Tubbo, which was a bit rude in Tommy’s opinion (only Tommy got to ignore him like that) then nodded. “Okay,” Tommy wasn’t sure exactly what he’d expected, but it wasn't Technoblade to agree with him.

“I may know a few people/” Phil offered hesitantly, as he rubbed his chin “I dunno if they could translate it, or if I would trust them to do it, but they might be able to give us enough information to get started.”

Tommy nodded. “I don’t think this timeline’s Karl will be useful yet, fucking asshole. I have no idea where he is, first of all, but even if I did, I don’t think he is a time-traveler yet.”

Phil frowned and nodded. “And is there anyone else from, well, your future, that might know it now?”

Tommy frowned. None of the people he spent time with would. Well. he had no idea about Dream, but he’d rather get blown up again than ask that bastard for help. Enchanting table was so rare, no one had a use for it. Maybe Bad would since he was apparently old as fuck, but Tommy didn’t know if that was true and bad was too close to Dream for his comfort. The only person who even spoke a language he didn’t recognize was-

It was Ranboo. Ranboo, on a few occasions, had spoken to Tommy in something that certainly wasn't English, or, on one memorable occasion, he'd caught a glimpse of old minutes Ranboo had saved, and they were written in something that looked eerily similar to what was in the book. Of course, it would be Ranboo, who had given absolutely no indication as to where he was from because the poor bastard didn't know himself.

Tommy barked out a laugh. “Ender, of course.”

“What’s so funny?” Technoblade asked, “Care to let us in on the joke?”

Tommy shook his head “Nothing. Just can’t really think of anyone at all. This would be my luck, you know. The universe loves to make me the punchline of their jokes. Sometimes I think it actually punches me.”

Technoblade didn’t look like he believed him, but there really was no point in bringing Ranboo up or even Bad when Tommy had no fucking clue where to find either of them. “Alright.” Techno said finally, as his eyes slid to Phil’s “Well, it sounds like we’re going to find these contacts. Leave in two days?”

“You’re coming with us?” Tommy asked, a touch incredulous because he figured Phil would come, but Techno? Though he had come back last night, apparently “I thought you were done with your end of the deal.”

Techno squinted at him, “The deal? No this-” Techno cut himself off “Nah, this isn’t about the deal, I just think it sounds like fun. You had me on board at destroyin’.”

Tommy rolled his eyes “Of course, My bad for assuming anything else.” It was supposed to be a joke, but the awkward silence at the table that followed meant that it wasn’t exactly as lighthearted as Tommy hoped it would be. Fucking oops, or whatever.

“Two days is fine.” Phil said finally “That gives everyone some time to rest, and get things packed up. Then we’ll go to my contacts and see if we can get a start on this book, and look for Wilbur.”

“Sounds good, big man.” Tommy agreed. He wanted to leave today. He wanted to find Wilbur, and ensure that he was safe. He wanted to read the book, and hope it said that this was all some sick joke. He wanted to get started so that he could get all this over with. So that he didn’t have to sit between his father and brother who would, eventually, hate him. They still didn’t know the whole truth and Tommy, at this point, wasn’t stupid enough to think that they wouldn’t find out. Until then, he could at least pretend. Maybe they wouldn’t disown him if he proved himself this time when they found out what he’d done. What kind of shitty person he was. He wanted to leave now, but it wasn’t feasible. Techno and Phil looked exhausted, and Tommy wanted to make his sword anyway.

That didn’t make him any more patient, and the urge to leave had already been eating him up.

Shit, it was going to be a long two days.

Chapter End Notes

1) hey people I actually like this chapter, and it will FINALLY move us officially into the next arc. Obviously Tommy is still keeping secrets, and told Tubbo basically nothing, but made tubbo think he knew things, and Doomsday hasn't been addressed, but the book and Wilbur will be the main focus for the next bit. This chapter wrapped up some loose ends and did exposition for the next bit. I think its kind of boring, but unfortunately enssecary. Techno's part is by far my favorite.

2) Someone was inspired by my book (which is insane holy shit) so please go read their fic Hamnet! The link under the notes should take you there! They are so talented!!

3) so I didn't work anything of the actual book text in, but I've written Karl's journal and currently it is over 2k words. just have fun with that tidbit. Another random fact is that I am doing this instead of the hours of homework I have to do someone please help me. Why is writing this so much easier than anything else I do?

4) ok, so I know Wilbur hasn't been seen in a while but I promise I have some good stuff in the works for him, I promise!

5) Currently projecting that this fic will end up being around 30 chapters? Not sure, but I have several plot points planned out that I'm not certain how long it will take to get to/through them. Fun fact, this fic is now longer than the first Harry Potter book! This is in official novel-length now people.

6) You guys are awesome! I love you all! You all are so nice. Have a pleasant week! See you next time!

why don't you play nice?

Chapter Summary

Tubbo and Tommy have fun and Phil meets with an old friend.

Chapter Notes

Enjoy the chapter! not really any warnings that shouldn't be covered in tags.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Somehow, leaving home was harder the second time than the first.

Not that the house had been home for Tommy in a long, long time, but still. It had been home, once, and maybe if he hadn't fucked things up so badly he could've stayed. Maybe it could've been home again, at least for a little while.

The first time Tommy left he was angry- not that he wasn't still a bit angry- but it was blinding rage and hurt and Wilbur and Tubbo had been there with him, their bags packed in a rush or not at all, and it was like running away, rather than leaving. Tommy hadn't considered going back, but he also hadn't considered that day that he would never go back.

~~He didn't really consider it, not really, until Phil told him it was gone, destroyed, just like every other place he'd ever lived and it was too late.~~

But over the last two days, they had all wired together, boarding up windows, emptying out drawers, releasing the livestock, and sorting through the seemingly endless chests scattered throughout the house and barns, trying to figure out what they all needed. And looking up at the house, emptied of everything important, border dup like a fucking coffin, it made his gut twist. It was the physical proof of his failure- or the life, that, for just a few happy hours, Tommy had considered he might get to have. Of course, that had been fucking stupid. Hope was a bullshit idea.

The house, even when they left that day, still looked like it did, in the happy memories Tommy had of his childhood- alive, warm, and stable. It looked dead now. It felt like they'd boarded it up like a coffin. A small part of Tommy wanted to change his mind- wanted to run back into his childhood bedroom, and burrow himself into the covers- hide there until Wilbur, or Tubbo, or even Technoblade came to get him for dinner, pulling him out of bed, comparing about how lazy he'd been, laying in bed all day.

Tommy would complain and they'd shout, and maybe play fight, shoving each other down the steps, to have dinner at the table. Or maybe Tommy just wanted to go crawl into that bed and never wake up, pretend that Wilbur was in his room, that everything that had happened, or may hadn't happened, was all just a fucked up dream. Maybe he could just sleep forever, pretending to be safe in a house that was probably the closest thing to a home he'd ever had.

Of course, that was a fantasy. One that Tommy had fucked up all on his own this time around. Typical. This time Wilbur hadn't even blown it up, it was all Tommy and his stupid issues. He really was the problem? Tommy's reverie was shattered by a hand falling on his shoulder. "You alright mate?"

Tommy couldn't help his flinch at the unexpected contact, especially because it was Phil, who was looking at Tommy with what appeared to be genuine concern.

Tommy shrugged Phil's hand off as he swallowed past what definitely wasn't a lump in his throat (he wasn't going to fucking cry, like a pussy), and rolled his eyes. "I'm fine." He snapped, a little more watery than he intended to "Just getting fucking cold. I'm ready to go. I'm gonna turn into an ender-damned ice statue if we stand here too long"

Phil didn't quite look like he believed that, and Tommy thought that he might try to argue or get Tommy to admit emotions and shit, but Techno, for once, had timing that actually worked in Tommy's favor, and shouted: "Come on, we don't have all day, let's go!"

"I'm coming, bitch!" Tommy called, bounding towards the horses with more energy than he really felt. He ignored the way Phil's eyes burned into his back as he hoisted himself up onto the horses' back. It was still half-wild, tamed specifically for this trip. Tubbo and Techno were already on their horses, and Phil was going to fly, rather than walk. "Let's go!"

“Got everything?” Techno asked, now that Tommy was closer, looking between him and tUbbo, who was sitting on his own horse “We can’t just come back for anything if you decide you want it later.”

Tommy rolled his eyes. “I know, Big man, I’ve got all my shit, I’m not stupid. And yes, I put the fucking notebook in my enderchest, not my inventory.”

“I have all the enchanting books!” Tubbo said cheerfully- far too cheerfully for the dim pre-dawn light. “And like, a whole stack of food and stuff.”

Tommy zoned out, as Tubbo and Techno discussed whatever they had, or what they were supposed to have, and spared one last glance back at the house. It just looked cold, and sad, as the sheep they’d let go roamed around. Phil had said that they’d come back, eventually, once they had Wilbur. Once everything was good.

Tommy wasn’t sure that that was true. He wasn’t sure he even wanted to come back if he could.

Either way, as they finally, finally headed out, Tommy couldn’t shake the feeling that this was something final- something more permanent than the first time. Tommy gripped the reins tightly and stared at Teehno’s cloak, refusing to look back at what was once his home.

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They arrived at the server where Phil’s first contact lived after about a day of travel on the server paths. Unfortunately, much like Phil, the guy was a little paranoid, apparently, and levied about two days’ travel, even by horseback, into the server according to Phil, who just happened to know the coords. He could get there faster on wings, of course. But no one else had any fucking wings, so the group would take at least two days to get there, then another two to get back.

So, Phil left them. Again.

And okay, *maybe* Tommy was being a little dramatic, considering that Phil was literally going to this guy on Tommy's behalf, but he still wasn't a fan of being left behind, yet again. At least this time Technoblade had also been left behind too, which just served him right in Tommy's opinion.

They were staying in a little inn, just outside of the main trading hub, that surrounded the server entrance. The server was pretty small, one that was modded mostly to be a trading hub, with a few thousand blocks each direction, that a handful of wealthy people owned, according to Phil. One of his friends was one of the wealthy, or at least wealthier people, who chose to live here because while it was a moderately sized hub, it was still small, and only a few villages were sprinkled in between. It wasn't nearly as nice as Tommy's hotel, not by a long shot, but then again, Tommy had built the best fucking hotel ever and it wasn't even done.

"I'm bored." Tommy proclaimed, sprawled out across one of the two beds in their room. Technically, the bed was Technoblade and the other was for him and Tubbo to fight over, but Tubbo was sprawled across the other while Technoblade was out getting breakfast or something.

"Me too." Tubbo agreed. "Sitting and waiting is boring."

"Let's go do something then," Tommy decided. "We can go ask around for Wilbur. He probably isn't still here but he might've come through."

"Yeah!" Tubbo said, sitting up "Maybe he traded some shit here! Or maybe he got kidnapped and he traded himself for a meal."

"What the fuck, Tubbo," Tommy asked as he sat up. "I don't- Whatever. Come on. Let's go!"

Tubbo pulled on his shoes, as Tommy did the same. Briefly, he wondered if they should leave the room. Technoblade had muttered something when he left, but honestly? Tommy hadn't been listening.

Sue him, he was fucking tired and shit.

Tommy had passed out almost as soon as Phil had left, which was like, in the middle of the night, so Tommy was now just.. Awake, despite it being way too early for you know, being conscious, he and Tubbo both were, because the inter-server travel just fucked up sleep schedules. Tommy had been half awake when Techno left and hadn't really listened. Not that Tommy really cared, if he was being honest. So his options were to go out or stay in, and staring up at the stupid wood ceiling of the inn was the worst option because that might require actually living with his thoughts and in the words of Ranboo. "I'll keep all my emotions right here...and then one day I'll die".

.....That joke was a little funnier before Tommy had actually died for the last time. It was still funny but, yeah, maybe he wouldn't joke about that yet.

"Come on, let's go! You're zoning out again dummy." Tubbo said, plopping his hand on the top of Tommy's head "Ohh, do you have worms in your brain? Is that a future thing?"

"Why the fuck would that be a thing Tubbo?" Tommy said, swatting his friend's hand away from his head. "No, I'm just thinking about where we'll go first."

"We should start near the port." Tubbo said, which did make sense "Since that's probably where the most people would have seen him."

"Alright." Tommy said, standing up, "Let's go."

Their room opened up directly outside, rather than into any hallway, so they just trudged down the steps and onto the somewhat busy street. There were people bustling about, despite the somewhat early hour so no one paid any mind to the two of them bounding out into the street.

They easily wove in and out of crowds until they reached the port, which was almost directly in the center of the town. The stalls near there were already open or were just starting to open, with people placing goods out. It was, honestly, a bit overwhelming to see so many people. Tommy had gotten so used to the SMP, which really had a limited number of people in it, that he hardly remembered what real trading servers were like.

Tommy could hardly remember what it was like, to be around so many people- so many strangers. The SMP had been big, but there had never really been that many people on it, not really.

“You okay?” Tubbo asked quietly “You’ve gone all worm-brain again.”

“No worries big T.” Tommy said, forcing a smile “Just. Thinking. Planning. Got big plans. Let’s start with that guy- he looks like he sells lots of important shit.”

Tubbo shrugged “Good as any place to start.”

There weren’t really any customers yet, since the guy was just setting out the last of his merchandise when Tommy and Tubbo walked over. “Hello,” Tommy greeted loudly, and the man jumped a bit, which made Tommy stifle a laugh because he wasn’t sure how the man hadn’t seen them coming. “Good morning, I’ve got a quick question here, if you have a moment.”

The man frowned, barely glancing up from the crates of... something he was stacking, “Kid, I’m a little busy setting up my stall here.”

“Listen, mate, I just need-” Tommy started, because come on, they only needed like ten seconds from the bastard and.

“Kid, I said I’m busy. If you’re just gonna stand here and gab, then leave. I can’t have you scaring off my customers with your shouting.” The man grumbled, glaring up at them.

Tommy opened his mouth to argue because fuck that guy, when Tubbo grabbed Tommy’s arm, leaning into him heavily. “Oh, I’m sorry sir.” Tubbo said “We’ll leave. I mean, our brother is still missing, and without him, I don’t know what we’re going to do, but I understand why you won’t help up.”

Tubbo's voice wobbled perfectly as he employed what Tommy called his highest grade of emotions manipulation. "You have enough gold for one more bread, don't you?" he asked Tommy and it was all Tommy could do to swallow a laugh.

"Yeah, I think so," Tommy said, making a show of patting his pockets. "A few nuggets in my inventory, I think. But, our room runs out today and I don't know if we'll have enough for both."

Tubbo sniffed loudly, as they turned away "Oh, that doesn't matter. What's another cold night?"

"Ah, damn it- wait!" The man called "Wait, hold on."

Tommy caught the flash of amusement in Tubbo's eyes as they turned around.

"You said you were looking for your brother?" The vendor said, looking put out and a little bit guilty. "What's he look like?"

"He's very tall." Tommy said, "Very tall, very skinny. Brown floppy hair, glasses, and probably had a guitar? The bitch said he was coming back for us but it had been so long since he left we've been trying to trace his footsteps..."

The Vendor frowned "Sorry mates. I don't remember anyone like that stopping by recently, but it also sounds like he has a pretty common description and I'm not good with faces."

"That's okay." Tommy said, but he didn't have to fake the disappointment, as his shoulders slumped "He does have a forgettable face."

The vendor still looked a little uncomfortable, and a little bit guilty "Here, kid, listen. I don't make a habit of handouts, but I feel a little bad. Save your gold for the room. Here's a half loaf of bread. It isn't much but it'll keep you from starving."

The vendor bundled up what looked like might have been the remains of his own breakfast and shoved it into Tubbo's waiting hands. "And go try the stall down the street that sells fish. The lady that works there never forgets a face, and always has extras."

Tubbo gasped, perhaps a tad overdramatically. "Oh, thank you. Thank you so much. We appreciate it so much!"

"Yeah, whatever." The vendor snapped "Don't think I'll be this kind again. I hope you find your brother though."

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The vendor was right. Though the old lady had never seen Wilbur, she did give them an extra fish, after they spun the same tale, and told them that she would keep an eye out for him. And, even if Tommy was pretty sure Wilbur hadn't stopped by this server, he and Tubbo went from vendor to vendor, with Tubbo pulling out his fake tears, and sob story, well, who could blame them? They needed to be sure Wilbur hadn't stopped by, after all.

~~And Tommy definitely wasn't looking for a distraction and he definitely wasn't disappointed. Nope. Fuck that. Fuck off.~~

It was going great, perfectly actually. Over and over, and within the hour, they had two loaves of bread, a few apples, and some fish. They were in the middle of trying to get sympathy from a merchant selling ores, (because Tommy really wanted to enchant the netherite sword he'd forged at home, and while yeah they *had* some Lapis, if they could get some for free, well, Tommy was all about being economical.) when someone cleared their throat behind them.

Both of them tensed, because while, okay, lots of people clear their throat, Technoblade had a way of doing it that was somehow almost threatening. And that was a threatening throat clear.

"What are you two doin'?" Technoblade asked, looking both confused and a little menacing. "I thought I told you to stay in the room."

“Do you know these boys?” The gruff man who was selling Lapis asked, narrowing his eyes. Tommy wondered if he was related to the first merchant. Both of them were tall and grumpy assholes, that they were manipulating beautifully.

“Depends on what they did,” Technoblade said flatly, narrowing his eyes at Tommy. They look practically screamed, ‘what did you do?’, which fuck, Tommy had done something, but really, did it warrant this reaction? And Tommy definitely wasn’t just a little bit panicked. Nope.

“I thought you two said you were alone, looking for your brother?” The man, who had some lame bitch name like Gary, said suspiciously “It doesn’t look like you’re alone.”

“Well, you see-”

“Technically-” Tommy and Tubbo both started talking, but the vendor didn’t want to hear it, apparently, because he didn’t even let them finish.

“You two little bastards were trying to scam me.” He yelled, and heads were starting to turn, which wasn’t exactly great since they’d already stopped at most of those vendors. Tommy wasn’t really scared of these people. Tommy was fast and he was good at fighting, but man Phil would be pissed if he came back to find them kicked out of the server. “Why I ought to-”

“They’re just idiots,” Technoblade cut in smoothly, stepping in front of Tommy and Tubbo, “I’m sorry for any trouble that they caused you. They’re harmless, just... stupid.”

Tommy started to protest, but Tubbo stomped on his foot painfully, and Tommy bit back a yelp and settled for glaring at the back of Technoblade’s head, which was about the only thing he could see since he was still fucking shorter than Technoblade, which sucked.

“I trust that this will be enough for any trouble that they caused?” Technoblade asked coolly and Tommy could just see a flash of gold- it looked like a couple of gold ingots.

“They’re little criminals in the making.” The man snapped, still yelling a little too loud for Tommy’s comfort because people were really starting to look and Tommy was starting to get the urge to run.

“People are looking,” Tubbo whispered, very helpfully. “I think we fucked up a bit.”

“No shit.” Tommy hissed, leaning against Tubbo.

“Listen, they aren’t criminals,” Technoblade said dryly “Just idiots. No need to cause a scene is there? I paid you and they didn’ even take anything’.” Technoblade’s hand drifted down towards where he had his sword strapped to his side because Technoblade was a dramatic bitch.

He still couldn’t see the vendor, because Technoblade was physically standing between them, but there was a moment of silence. “Fine, but if I see those two little bastards around my stall again, I’ll not hesitate to call the authorities.”

Technoblade made a noise that wasn't pleased “Fine. Trust me, you won’t have to see them again.”

That... was ominous.

And when Technoblade turned around, Tommy kinda wished that Technoblade had just left them to the mercy of the authorities. Tommy was pretty sure he could outrun these authorities, considering how much he’d already done it. His escaping from Technoblade rates were far, far lower.

“Come on.” he growled at them “let’s go.”

Tubbo shot Tommy a half-panicked look and Tommy shrugged helplessly. He was pretty sure Technoblade wasn't going to hurt him, like 76% sure. But, the vendors were glaring at them and Tommy really had nowhere else to go, so he swallowed his pride and tugged Tubbo along with him.

Well, at least he had three lives to lose.

Somewhere a few thousand blocks away, nearly at the server boundary, Phil knocked on the imposing oak door firmly and waited with his hands clasped in front of him. He had his wings pulled tightly against his back, hidden under his cloak as he waited patiently for an answer. To any stray passerbys, of which there were none, considering the dense woods that surrounded the house, Phil would have looked relaxed and patient. In reality, he was anything but.

Phil's wings ached with the force at which he was holding them still- they desperately wanted to twitch and flutter, letting out some of the tension that he felt in every muscle. His knuckles were white with the force he was gripping them together, and they itched for the sword or bow in his inventory. But, bringing weapons into what Phil hoped would be a peaceful and painless negotiation between two old friends, wasn't a good tone-setter. And neither were the black wings, unfortunately, as they were a staunch reminder of what and who Phil was, exactly.

Phil was shorter than most people, he knew that- it came with being an avian- and in the past few years his face had softened, his hair had gotten even longer, and the scars on his arms had started to fade. Phil looked softer, and he blamed it on parenthood, even with the new scars that had been added solely because of that. If Phil could get grey hair, then he most certainly would have it. Avian genes kept him young, but he wasn't sure how long they would hold up in the face of his boys. He also probably just looked like shit in general, if he was honest, because he hadn't ever really stopped to rest on the way here, only catching a couple of hours of sleep in the top of a nice tall tree when he nearly fell out of the sky, so he probably looked like a slightly homeless, just barely middle-aged bastard.

But, Phil knew he could still be terrifying if he so chose. It wasn't conceited, it was a fact. Phil knew that if he chose to, it wouldn't matter if his face looked soft or not- his blade still worked just the same- Phil was still a warrior. It wasn't his fault if the guise of fatherhood made people underestimate him. It was a useful trick, should he choose to use it.

He sincerely hoped that he wouldn't. Phil liked being pleasant. It was so much nicer than bloodshed. And the man who lived here, Everton, had met Phil a lifetime ago when his wings still dripped blood and the Angel of Death was the boogeyman that came in the night to start and end wars.

Everton had been less effective than Phil, though that could be said for almost anyone at the time, they had often worked together and when Everton had had enough when he'd lost everything to the lifestyle, Phil had helped him leave. Phil had given him diamonds and gold and sent him on his way, because while Phil did not yet understand, Everton was the closest thing he'd had to family

Phil was debating knocking again, when the old door finally creaked open, revealing a thin girl who looked to be no older than twelve, staring up at Phil with suspicious eyes. "State your business," she demanded, and perhaps if she didn't have to look up at Phil so that she could see his eyes, he might have been a bit more intimate. Probably not, but hey, Phil could give her the benefit of the doubt.

"I'm here to speak with Everton." Phil said pleasantly "And I know the paranoid old bastard lives here, and is home, so please don't lie to me."

Phil had seen the curtain move in a second-story window, that was far too tall to be this little girl. The girl swallowed "He doesn't take visitors." She said, sounding a bit unsure "I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you to leave."

Phil didn't hurt children. He wouldn't if he could avoid it, and he never *really* hurt them. But Phil wasn't afraid to safely remove them from the equation if it meant getting inside. And today He had no patience for the paranoid games of his old friend, not when Wilbur's life and Tommy's sanity might hang in the balance.

"What's your name, mate?" Phil asked her, tilting his head slightly as he looked down at the girl, who in reality, Phil realized was probably closer to then than twelve. Why the fuck was she the one answering the door?

She seemed taken aback by the question. "Uh, Abby?"

Phil gave her a smile that he had used mostly on his own kids, mostly when he was about to make them do something they didn't want to. "Well, Abby, 'm very sorry about this, but I'm afraid I will not be leaving just yet."

Her brown eyes widened "Wait, no-"

Phil pushed past her with ease, her thin arms doing little to stop him, though no fault of her own. Phil was, if nothing else, an adult man. He also happened to have years of combat training. A ten-year-old girl wasn't exactly going to stop him, despite whatever Everton must have thought. Did he really look that soft these days?

"Hey!" she exclaimed, grabbing his arm in a surprisingly tight grip, as she tried to pull him toward the door, which, to be fair, she had very little success with. "You can't be in here!"

Phil turned back to her and gave her another apologetic smile, though he wasn't particularly sorry. "Mate, you can't stop me. Please stop trying."

"No! You can't-"

"Let him go, Abby." Abby's gaze snapped to the top of the stairs as did Phil's where a tall, thin man was standing, glaring straight at Phil. "Leave us. It's alright"

Abby looked conflicted, but let Phil go, and scurried out of the foyer, into one of the many doors off the room. Phil was glad he didn't have to try and fight the girl off and risk hurting her if she got violent or some shit. The clear dismissal of the child made Phil's stomach twist slightly. Why the fuck was she even here?

Everton, looking just the same as he always did, but with a few more grey hairs, descended the steps. Where Phil was on the shorter side, Everton was almost as tall as Wilbur, and these days were even thinner. He looked like a man who had never touched a weapon in his life.

“Hello Everton,” Phil said lightly, as the man approached. “Are you using children to be your bodyguards now?”

Everton’s face pinched slightly at the accusation and Phil felt a spike of satisfaction. Good. Fucking put a kid as bait was low, even for him. He studied the other man briefly, mostly to see if he had any weapons. Everton was wearing a nice suit and shoes, and Phil could see the gold accessories in multiple places. He looked like a man of wealth or status, and Phil supposed that he was now. There was perhaps a sword in his inventory, though Phil knew good and well that Everton’s arm wasn’t what it once was, and the way he favored his leg? Phil wasn’t looking for a fight, but if it came down to it, it looked like there wouldn’t be much of one anyway.

“What do you want, Philza?” Everton asked, ignoring the barb, but there was no mistaking the ice in his tone. Phil arched an eyebrow. He must’ve hit a sore spot.

“I expected a warmer welcome from my old friend,” Phil said, and that wasn’t even a lie. He knew Everton was a paranoid bastard- always had been, but the last time Phil had visited him, nearly six years ago, Everton had welcomed him with open arms. What the fuck had changed. Phil hadn’t even done anything of interest since then. “What’s the problem, mate?”

“The problem,” Everton hissed, about as angry and Phil had ever heard him. “Is that you are bringing danger to my doorstep, Philza.”

Phil’s eyebrows shot up, at the sheer hatred in Everton’s tone. Alright then, Everton was definitely pissed about something. Phil had always considered the man his friend, or, as much as he had friends, and while there was always some sense of tension, there had never been outright hostility. “You didn’t seem to be too concerned last time, Everton. In fact, I remember you asking for a favor. Which I didn’t do, of course, but you weren’t so scared of me then.”

“That was before I realized you were training *him*.” Everton snapped. It took Phil a moment, but he realized he was talking about Technoblade. Phil tensed as the other man continued to rant.

“You were the angel of Death, Phil and I myself have done unspeakable things. I will not pretend otherwise. But that man, that monster *it* has no control. I saw, once, what it did on a

battlefield. The survivors said that it wasn't even remotely human, what happened. It was blood for the sake of blood. If you trained something like that... I do not know you as well as I thought I did, Phil. You killed of course, but you understood mercy. You never enjoyed blood for the sake of blood. Or I thought so."

It was only years of those same sentiments being thrown at him and his son that kept Phil from slamming that bastard into a wall, and beating his face into a pulp, old friend or not. Technoblade was more than a weapon, but many people didn't see it that way. When people called Technoblade a monster- seemed to think him less than human, Phil had to bite back the sheer rage that bubbled in his chest. Technoblade wasn't half as violent as people made him out to be, never had been, Hell, he'd been farming potatoes for the last six months, damn it, and hadn't lost control of Chat like that since he was seventeen, because the only time it ever got that bad, so violent, was when it wasn't even really Techno anymore. It was when it was those ender damned voices screaming at him, so loudly that he couldn't think.

Techno was his son, and even if he was the so-called blood god, he was still a person. I... it left a bitter taste in Phil's mouth. But, he swallowed it down, because screaming would gain him nothing.

"I don't, Everton," Phil said, carefully. "You of all people should know that."

Everton shook his head, looking at Phil with something akin to pity and anger "I don't know anymore, Phil. But what I do know, is that I don't want any of that attention here. From you or the bastard you trained, I left that life before you even did, and I have lived in fear of retribution every day since then. And now that I have--"

Everton cut himself off, but Phil wasn't blind. He saw the way that Everton's eyes flickered to the door that Abby had vanished through earlier. Ah. That made... sense. Everton had always distanced himself from people after his wife died. That was twenty years ago, but the paranoia that Everton had and the guilt had haunted him. Phil had seen it. Everton, for all his paranoia and greed, wasn't a *bad* guy. Phil just hadn't expected a fucking kid, that the man actually let himself care for.

"She's yours." Phil wasn't asking and Everton slumped slightly, defeat written in the slope of his shoulders. Phil couldn't quite find it in himself to feel guilty. He was here for his sons. Not this man's kid.

“Not biologically.” Everton said finally “But yes. She’s lived with me for nearly five years now. I didn’t recognize you approaching, or I wouldn’t have let her answer the door. Normally people will turn away when a kid answers the door and says that she doesn’t know me. She’s a brilliant liar when she wants to be.”

Phil nodded slowly. Everton clearly cared about the kid even if he was using her as a human shield. “And that’s why I’ve become a recluse. I don’t want her to get hurt. I know that you can’t understand that Phil, but-”

Phil couldn’t help but laugh, startling Everton, who pinned him with a glare. “Sorry mate, it isn’t funny,” he said, and really, it wasn’t.

It pissed him off a little, accusing him of not understanding what it’s like to want to protect a kid, but really, Phil had never told him about his boys so who could blame him. Phil would be the first one to admit that back in the day he was the last guy most people expected to take on a kid. And Phil really didn’t tell anyone about his boys, in fairness. People assumed that Technoblade was an apprentice or some shit, and Phil let them assume that if they wanted. Word getting around that the Angel of Death had kids? Even years after retirement, that would be a target someone would love to take.

Everton, while Phil admittedly didn’t trust him, trusted him more than he did most people, and at this point, Phil just wanted to see the bastard eat his words a bit “It’s just, you never really asked me why I dropped off the fucking map all those years ago.”

Everton stared at him for a moment, before his eye widened slightly. “You had a kid? Technoblade is your kid?”

Phil tilted his head in admission, with a slight grin “Adopted, but I did raise him after I found him as a little thing in the Nether. I’ve two other sons as well. And, well, in the end, I’m here for them.”

Everton studied him with an expression Phil couldn’t quite read before he finally nodded. “I see. Well, I’m glad you trusted me with that information, Philza. But then you do understand

why I can't have you here. Why whatever it is you want me to do, I can't do it. I won't, Phil. I owe you a debt, but it isn't that big. Abby deserves to be safe here."

"I'm not asking you to fight, Everton," Phil said, raising his hands slightly because really, he wasn't. It was a bit rude that Everton thought that, but the bastard always did see the worst in people. "You don't even have to leave your house, which I'm sure is trapped to hell. I'm sure Abby is hiding in some panic room right now, and you only a few steps away from one. I just need some information. I know that's what you deal in, these days collecting rare books and information."

"Fine." Everton said after a long moment of silence, "What do you want to know?"

Phil was starting to get exhausted of the stupid song and dance they were doing. "Enchanting Table. Can you read it?"

Everton's eyebrows shot up in surprise. "Reading Enchanting table? I can't do that- no one can do that, Phil. It's a dead language for a reason."

"Well what about translating materials, a fucking book or scroll, or anything." Phil pressed. Everton had always loved books. Phil bet that half the rooms in his too-big house would be filled with books and shit, that contained far more important knowledge than even Phil's most precious texts. Phil knew a lot, but Everton had always been the information man.

"I don't have anything. There isn't any point, anyway- everything that's written in Enchanting Table has already been translated." Everton said "And the originals are long lost, or kept hidden by a few human clerics. What on earth do you need it for?"

Phil couldn't help the way his shoulders slumped "So you have nothing? Fuck."

Everton hesitated "I really don't have anything Phil, but, well... it's just a rumor."

Phil's head snapped up. A rumor wasn't great, it wasn't what he wanted, but damn it, it was better than what else they had which was a fuck ton of nothing. "Tell me," Phil demanded.

Everton smoothed his suit jacket with his hands. "It may not be true." he warned "but, I have heard rumors, in the book collecting and information circles that there is a translation book. I've never seen it, most people haven't, but there are a few people that claim that it has translation instructions for written Enchanting Table."

"Do you have any idea where I might find it?" Phil asked, heart, leaping in hope. It wasn't much, wasn't really anything, but it wasn't nothing, and that's halfway what Phil thought he'd be walking out with.

Everton sighed "My guess is that if you're here, I was your first stop. You have a list, likely of the same names I do. King doesn't know, and neither does Mariell. Try the others and see. I never heard a location, just whispers from King about it."

Phil nodded. Those names *were* on his list. For as long as it had been, Everton was still smart. He had once known Phil very well and it was no surprise that he could easily guess who was on his list. "Thank you."

Everton nodded sharply. "My debt is paid to you, Phil. And while I wish you the best, on whatever crusade you're on, I ask that you never come back here. I know that look in your eye- you'd tear the world down for you.. Your kids. I can't fault you for that. But I will not have Abby dragged into this."

Phil swallowed down the sharp words. Everton had been, as far as friends went for Phil, his friend. It wasn't entirely a surprise, considering how paranoid the man had always been and in this case, Phil couldn't even fault him. But still. Phil had given Everton this life- had helped put him here and now... Phil would not burn this bridge with harsh words. It would do no good, considering he was already standing in the ashes.

"Goodbye, Everton." Phil said as he headed for the door, letting his wings spread behind him, as he prepared to take off "Thank you for the information. I hope that we may never meet again."

Chapter End Notes

1) Sorry this took so long, but real life has me by the throat right now, and apparently, I'm incapable of writing short chapters these days. I /could/ have split this into two but I really didn't want to, since it had already taken so long to get this out. also it is still Friday where I am so fuck yeah I met my internal deadline

2) Everton is not really important in the long run. I just needed a character to provide a sprinkling of Philza backstory.

3) I dunno how I feel about Phil's part. I couldn't quite get it right, but I'm really happy with Tommy's section here so I hope it makes up for it.

4) I have a 1700 word outline going right now that goes from this chapter on, and I am still not done with the outline lol. I have some parts I am so excited to get out to you guys! I am beyond excited! This chapter was something I really enjoyed but I have so much good stuff in store. I also know that I promised Wilbur content and I swear you will get it, I swear but.... it might be a while? It's for narrative reasons I promise it will be worth it! Also, we are getting content from a character that I am so excited about in this. Y'all aren't ready.

5) As always you can find me on [tumblr](#) and come talk to me. I post random dsmg stuff and updates about this series, as well as the occasional extra special content. Also since I've never said this, you can call me alma (or regret, if you prefer not to use names lol).

6) I love you guys so much! you all rock! Every single one of you though I must ask something of you: Hydrate, sleep, and do your homework! Go get some fresh air! Shower! Take care of yourself and have a wonderful day!

why don't you stare back?

Chapter Summary

Technosoft?

Chapter Notes

Technoblade my beloved, you have to stop taking over the chapters

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Technoblade had a headache and it wasn't even lunchtime.

This time it wasn't even Chat.

Well, not any more than it was *ever* Chat.

No, it was the fact that Technoblade really hadn't slept well in over four days and clocked maybe two hours the night before, and then had to keep the peace because Tommy and Tubbo had apparently started scamming and stealing from people the second they got left alone for more than five seconds.

Yeah, Wilbur *definitely* helped raise those kids. Tubbo's fake crying was scarily real, and if it wasn't almost exactly like Wilbur's, Technoblade might've fallen for it himself. Of course, he knew all of Wilbur's tricks and he was getting to know Tubbo, the one that wasn't the little kid he'd last seen years ago, and he hadn't believed that the sniffing was genuine for a second.

Not to mention, Tommy was involved and that was probably enough said.

He marched back to the inn, glancing over his shoulder every few seconds to ensure that Tommy and Tubbo hadn't tried to make a run for it. If they had, he was just going to let them go, because he'd already paid gold to get them out of what might've been an arrest (or an attempted arrest) and Technoblade was done pulling them out of trouble for the day.

And no Chat, he wasn't a liar, no matter how many times they shouted that at him.

"Techno-

"Not a word" Techno snapped, perhaps a little more harshly than he meant to, but at least it shut Tommy up, because ender, his head just hurt. Why were kids like this? How had Phil put up with four kids? Technoblade was never having kids.

And, okay, it wasn't that he didn't want Tommy to explain, he just wanted to do it *not* right in the middle of a crowd that apparently Tommy and Tubbo had been scamming while Techno was out getting food and valuable information. Technoblade really, really, really didn't want to start a riot or have to break the kids out of jail.

He would break them out of jail too, he supposed. Was he getting soft?

He glanced over his shoulder at their pale faces. Nah, definitely not soft.

It didn't take them long to be back in the admittedly cramped room in the inn, where Technoblade sat down on one bed, and Tommy and Tubbo sat on the other.

"What were you two doin'?" Techno asked, running a hand over his tired face. "I thought you were going to get arrested."

"We were asking about Wilbur." Tommy said defensively "We were trying to find out information about him. Big Man, keep up. Wanted to see if he'd come through."

Technoblade sighed "Then why were you being accused of stealin'?"

“It wasn't stealing.” Tubbo corrected, sounding just a hint nervous. They were giving it to us! For free! It's not my fault they thought we were poor orphans.”

“You are an orphan Tubbo.” Tommy pointed out “And I just said that I was looking for my brother, which is true, by the way, so really, Big T, i have no idea what you're on about.”

Technoblade felt it should be noted he was exhibiting extreme patience and should be rewarded for such.

“Tommy, I literally had to pay that guy off so he didn't call the enforcers or whatever authorities this town has.” Technoblade said, “I'm askin' again: what were you doing?.”

Tommy's jaw was clenched and Technoblade could see something that might have been adjacent to fear flash in his eyes before he lifted his jaw, meeting Technoblade's challenge.

“Fine, we may have, possibly, potential, let all those vendors believe that we were homeless orphans who were about to be kicked on the street and starve if we didn't find our older brother, who may or may ot have been Wilbur. And Tubbo may or may not have fake cried” Tommy said, shrugging. “We weren't hurting anyone Techno, and we are looking for Wilbur, so it isn't technically a lie.”

Technoblade shook his head. “So you just scammed those people?”

“....yes?”

Technoblade snorted, the irritation draining out of him. “Of course you did. You know we can pay for stuff, right? We aren't- we aren't *poor* Tommy.”

“Old habits die hard,” Tommy said dismissively, and Technoblade wasn't sure what that meant- he wasn't sure he wanted to know what that meant actually.

“If you pay for it you didn’t *earn* it.” Tubbo butted in, like that was the most obvious thing in the world. “I get my things the proper way- theft and scams!”

Technoblade genuinely had no idea if the kid was kidding or not. He was inclined to say he was, with the way he was grinning, but his eyes seemed earnest in a way that made him just unsure enough that Technoblade decided he might need to keep his valuables locked down a little tighter.

Tommy looked defensive, and about ten seconds from bolting, though to be fair, Tommy looked like that pretty often these days. Technoblade wanted to push because really, they just had to cause trouble the second they were left alone, but really, they didn’t technically do anything wrong, not really. And honestly, the gold bars Techno parted with would hardly be missed, in the long run.

“Well, did you at least get something good?” Technoblade finally asked, and the way that Tommy blinked in surprise, uncurling ever so slightly, well, Technoblade wouldn’t say it was worth it, but it was better than an argument. He missed his farm.

Technoblade was the only one awake when Phil stumbled into the room, nearly fourteen hours later. Techno had napped earlier, after sorting through Tubbo and Tommy’s somewhat impressive haul. Sure it was mostly just food, bread, some fish, some steak, but there were a few gold nuggets, and a singular compass that, while worn, looked sturdy enough. He’d allowed them to leave, so long as they avoided the vendors that they’d swindled already and that they actually paid for the things they got if they got anything (or, at least not get caught stealing.)

When he woke up, they were back with no obvious purchases, though who knew what they had stowed away in their inventory and Techno didn’t push it. Instead, he ventured out to get warm food, and they had a meal sitting on the floor of the crowded Inn room.

It hadn’t taken long for Tubbo and Tommy to pass out, both piled on a bed that was really to small for the two of them, Tommy curled up on the foot of the bed, while Tubbo was

sprawled almost starfish style. If Technoblade draped a blanket over them, well, it was cold. He didn't want to deal with a sick Tommy. The little gremlin was insufferable when he didn't feel good.

Techno was nearly caught up on sleep. As much as he ever slept anyway, and the Inn was crowded. With the voice chattering a little louder, it wouldn't hurt to sit guard. Just... just to be safe.

He didn't have his full regalia on, because that would be a bit uncomfortable, but he did have his chest plate strapped on, and his boots were on, though his long hair was pulled back into a simple ponytail, and his cloak was hanging by the door, and his mask and crown had been tucked into his enderchest, just for safekeeping. He didn't need people to realize Technoblade was in town, not really, so the dead giveaways had to be hidden.

Technoblade wasn't exactly startled when Phil stumbled in- he'd been hearing the footsteps since they came up the steps, tracking them mentally. He was almost certain that they were Phil's, after years of exposure, but Technoblade didn't let the tension drain from his shoulders until the lock clicked quietly and the sight of Phil's blonde hair peeking out from under the familiar green and white striped bucket hat.

Techno started to get up, but Phil waved a hand, just visible in the low light of the room, and Techno stayed in his seat.

Though Technoblade couldn't see very well in the dark room, that didn't stop him from automatically looking over him for any injuries, besides the exhausted slump of Phil's shoulders and wings, there didn't seem to be anything wrong with him, and something eased in Techno's chest. Phil was fine. They were all fine. Chat quieted too, just a bit, clingy little voices, most of them.

"You alright?" Techno asked quietly, hardly even a whisper. It didn't matter- Phil would hear him, with his sensitive ears,

"I'm fine, Tech. Just exhausted" Phil whispered back. Tommy shifted slightly on his end of the bed, where he was still curled into a ball. "Everything alright here?"

Technoblade glanced over at the sleeping teens. They looked deceptively innocent, sleeping like that, on a too-small bed, and he definitely didn't smile. Maybe, *maybe* he softened, but it was really just a trick of the light no matter how many *Technosoft's* Chat cooed. "Yeah, everyone's alright."

"Good," Phil murmured, and Techno found him face down in the pillows, shoes, and sword haphazardly discarded at the foot of the bed.

Technoblade debated asking another question, but a soft snore cut him off. Phil really was tired- so Technoblade would let him sleep and answers would be there in the morning.

Morning came, and it found Technoblade stiff from dozing on in the chair, though he wouldn't, couldn't complain, since he'd definitely slept in far more uncomfortable places. Not to mention Phil looked less dead on his feet than he had in ages- he'd actually slept for more than about three hours and Techno was glad, even if he'd run himself into the ground to be able to get it.

Tommy woke up surprisingly early, stretching and popping, and immediately searching for something to eat.

"Wake Tubbo up." Techno said gruffly, shoving Tommy's hands away from the bread he was slicing "We all need to be up anyway."

Tommy sighed dramatically, and then unceremoniously pushed Tubbo off the bed.

Tubbo yelped in surprise as he hit the floor, a tangle of flailing limbs and blankets as Tommy cackled. Phil laughed too, as Tubbo flipped Tommy off and techno just shook his head, hiding a slight grin.

"What was that for?" Tubbo whined, "Tommy, you're so mean."

“I’m hungry” Tommy countered, climbing off the bed “And Techno said you had to be up for us to eat. That was the most efficient way to wake you up, Big man.”

“Fuck off,” Tubbo muttered from the floor, where he appeared to be resigned to his fate of being tangled in blankets.

“Whatever. He’s up. Can we eat?” Tommy said, sprawling on the floor himself.

Techno sighed and handed Tommy two slices of bread with some cold steak between the two pieces. Not the best meal, but better than nothing. Tommy,. Once upon a time, before Technoblade left, Tommy would have complained about it being cold, or that he liked pork better, but Tommy scarfed it down without so much as a complaint, destroying it in a matter of seconds. Techno hadn’t really put it together before, but.. Tommy had been eating like that since, well, since Techno had been back. And now that he knew about the war And God, Tommy had really been through war? At 16? It... unfortunately made sense.

Technoblade hated how much more sense everything made.

He still had questions, sure, but he knew enough that it made him feel a little ill. Tommy was just a kid- a loud, brash, reckless kid who sometimes needed to be taught a lesson, but not through war. Not through dying.

Not through having Phil disown him. Not through having Technoblade supposedly hate him. Not like that.

A hand landed gently on his arm, and Technoblade’s head shot up and he met Phil’s eyes which glanced down at Techno’s hands and... oh. The knife he was using to cut the steak was buried deep into the small table, and the stone handle was cracked from the force of his grip. Technoblade let out a low sigh.

He glanced over his shoulder to find Tommy staring at him warily from the corner of his eye, while Tubbo continued to whine about being thrown out of bed.

Great.

Technoblade forced his shoulders to relax as he pulled the admittedly ruined knife out of the oak table with a grimace. Chat was spamming E, ever so helpfully. When Tommy was loud, it was... almost easy to forget, what was really going on. It was easy to pretend that nothing was wrong. That this was just Tommy, reckless and brash and bright, who loved his friends and talked a big talk, not someone who was scared of his own father and terrified of Technoblade. Not a kid who died and only avoided permanent death because apparently some god or glitch saw it fit to use him.

“Techno,” Phil said quietly, but firmly. Techno took a deep breath, shutting down that train of thought. Getting angry, riling up Chat... it wouldn’t do any good. Already their voices were crescendoing, just a bit.

Techoprotect

Brother Pog?

BrotherInnit

Technobro

Useful.

Even if the look of fear- the look of pure distrust- in Tommy’s eyes every time he looked at Techno and Phil was devastating concerning. Techno stabbing desks out of nowhere probably didn’t help that.

Techno cleared his throat “Don’t keep us in suspense, Phil.” he drawled, discarding the knife into the trash bin in the room. “What did you find out from your old friend?” At the mention of that, Tommy elbowed tubbo, who’d finally detangled himself from the blankets, effectively shutting him up.

Something dark flashed over Phil’s face for just a second before it was replaced with a half-smile. “Well, I got something- not much more than a rumor of a rumor, really, but- according

to my source, there is a book that essentially serves as an Enchanting Table to English translation source.”

“A translation book?” Technoblade asked, eyebrows climbing “That sounds...”

“Unrealistic, I know.” Phil agreed, “But I don’t think... I think he was telling the truth, about that book circulating in high circles. He never claimed it was true, just that he’d heard rumors.”

“So who has it? Or supposedly has it?” Tommy asked, “Who bitch do we need to go rob or something?”

Phil grimaced “Unfortunately he had no fcking idea who had it. I just got confirmation on my list of names to go talk to. That’s all he could give me. He says that he doesn’t know of anyone who can speak it and he certainly can’t.”

“Well, it’s better than nothing,” Technoblade said, finally. “Let’s start crossing off names.”

After that, things got both repetitive and, somehow, less predictable. They would go to a server- sometimes a big one, with hundreds or even thousands of people who lived there, and would travel days into the server. Phil would leave them in a city or a town, or a campsite to go talk to his contact, while Tommy and Tubbo asked around for Wilbur if they could, showing off a picture that Phil produced of Wilbur. It was a few months old, and Wilbur’s hair had been a bit longer (though Ender only knew what it looked like now.)

Technoblade would try not to get recognized (without his mask and with his hair pulled back and now crown, It wasn’t too hard. Especially since he’d spent the last several months prior to that farming potatoes, rather than taking on Hypixel or worse) and would buy supplies. If he had time, he would simply mine for diamonds and emerald and gold- the three most valuable forms of currency that were practically universal, no matter the server.

No one had really seen Wilbur yet- apparently, he was either forgettable or he was avoiding populus servers- most of Phil's contacts levied on large to mid-sized servers that had an open whitelist or one that was practically open. They weren't great for exploring, more trading, and settling down.

Those weeks, however boring in repetition, were interesting too. Especially because Tommy, well...he was Tommy.

"Big T" Tommy said, in a booming way that Technoblade now associated only with Tommy wanting something from him. "How are you?"

"No." Technoblade said flatly, not looking up from the blade he was sharpening "Whatever it is, my answer is no."

They were camped in the forest, sitting in a ring of bright torches to ward off mobs. This was the first night that they'd really camped and Techno was honestly glad to get out of the cities. Maybe it was because he spent years avoiding them as much as possible, but he preferred the quiet and the camping, even with the risk of mobs.

Tubbo was off, doing... something since it was still daylight, and Techno had spent the last few hours mining. His arms were tired and so was he. It was almost mid-afternoon, and he was planning on catching a nap because he would stay up at night to ensure that no particularly determined mobs managed to get into the campsite.

"You didn't even let me finish!" Tommy protested, flopping down on the ground just out of arm's reach. Technoblade glanced up at Tommy. He was practically vibrating and Techno could literally feel another headache coming on just from being in his proximity.

"I don't care." Technoblade said, "I'm tired, Tommy."

And Chat was being annoying and very unhelpful and was spamming one of their most annoying and nonsensical terms.

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Blood for the Blood God

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Blood Blood Blood Blood

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Shut up we aren't doing blood rn

“I just wanted help enchanting my sword, which we said we would do ages ago. It’s been almost three weeks since I made the sword, Techno- you have an unbreaking book, right?” Tommy pressed, producing the sword, which, Techno had to admit was rather well made, from his inventory.

“Yes, but we’re not doing that right now Tommy,” Technoblade said, putting his sword back into his inventory. “I’m tired and you are givin’ me a headache. You’re making me wish I was still farming potatoes.”

Tommy scoffed “Go back then. I’m not stopping you.” he snapped, as he stalked off, going to ender knows where.

Technoblade watched his retreating back and shook his head in annoyance. At least Tommy was leaving him alone.

(But, if that night, after Phil returned, if Techno snuck out, taking the netherite sword Tommy had deposited in the chest beside the tent and came back with one glowing with Enchantments, no one needed to know.)

~~(And if he didn't totally hate the brief hug that Tommy gave him the next morning, before Phil and Tubbo were up, well, no one needed to know that either).~~

--

Thankfully, Tommy's nightmares had lessened in frequency, after the incident, and Tommy spilled a lot of horrible things to Phil, but unfortunately, they didn't stop. He hadn't expected the to and Ender knows that Technoblade had his own fair share of terrible dreams. He had just learned how to have them quietly. Technoblade usually woke up with his jaws locked and his fists clenched, Chat screaming in his head.

Tommy usually just woke up with a soft sob or gasp, enough that Techno noticed when he was awake, but usually he quieted back quickly, so Techno never really bothered him. One night, however, Tommy and Tubbo were sleeping in the tent, and Phil was in the other, while Techno kept watch. The next night they should be in a town or village. Somewhere where they could lay in an actual bed and Techno could actually get a full night's sleep.

Techno had only dispatched a single zombie that night, and it was an exceptionally calm night. Or at least until Tommy came stumbling out of the tent, eyes wild. He wasn't crying but he was panting heavily, with his hair sticking straight up. Before Techno realized it, Tommy was halfway across the clearing, looking around wildly. Techno realized with a sense of vague horror that Tommy didn't look intent on stopping. He got to his feet, ready to run after the damn kid when Tommy tripped over his own damn boots, and fell hard, letting out a noise of panic as he hit the ground.

"Tommy?" Techno said approaching him. "Tommy, somethin' wrong?"

Tommy froze at the sound of Techno's voice, going stiff as a board, and for a split second, Techno wasn't sure that Tommy wasn't going to go into full-blown panic attack mode. Then,

Tommy rolled over. “Techno?”

“Yeah kid, its me.” Techno said gruffly “You good? You tore outta that tent faster than a baby zombie.”

Tommy shook his head as he pushed himself into a sitting position, “Yeah, I’m good.” he said quietly “I just- I... Woke up in a tent and... fucking hate tents.” He muttered, which didn’t really answer Techno’s questions.

“There a reason for that?” Techno asked gently “Or is it just a personal vendetta?”

Tommy snorted. “Yeah, uh, I got exiled for a while. Slept in a tent a lot. Haven’t liked camping much since then, but I can handle it usually. Just got a little... disoriented. .”

Techno filed that away as Tommy got to his feet. “Was that with Wilbur?” Tommy had mentioned being exiled with Wilbur, who had apparently gone crazy and blown up a country (Techno thought that sounded more like something he would do, but he supposed they were both raised by Philza). Though he thought Tommy had mentioned them living in a ravine rather than a tent.

Tommy stiffened beside him “No.” Tommy said shortly and offered no further information. Technoblade debated pressing the issue, but Tommy’s face was pale in the torchlight and a light sheen of sweat glistened on his Tommy’s forehead despite the cold night air. It wasn’t terribly cold, but Tommy shouldn’t have been sweating.

“Alright.” Technoblade said “Well, if you’re up, at least be useful. You can, uh,” what could Tommy do? There wasn’t really anything that needed doing, currently, since they were abandoning camp in a few hours, but if Tommy’s hands were busy maybe they’d stop shaking so badly. “You can help me repair a few arrows.”

Tommy didn’t even protest, just dropping beside Technoblade on the wooden blocks they were using for seats and took the damaged arrows without much of a word. Technoblade was caught off guard at how well Tommy took to it, but Tommy worked deftly beside him,

repairing fletchings and broken tips. They weren't perfect, but Technoblade really didn't really care, as he inspected them and stored them away in his inventory.

Tommy talked quietly, sometimes, complaining when he got a splinter in his finger and when the thin fletching ripped beneath his fingers. It didn't take long though for him to slow down, leaning more heavily against Technoblade, and eventually going limp and quiet.

He'd fallen asleep. Techno snorted softly and shifted his arm as gently as possible so that Tommy was pressed up against him under his cloak. When Phil got up about an hour later to relieve Technoblade he grinned deviously.

"Not a word," Techno grumbled, narrowing his eyes at Phil. Tommy shifted beside him and Techno lowered his voice "I just didn't want him catchin' a cold. Don't want to waste a healing potion on that."

"Sure mate." Phil said, looking too much like the cat who caught the canary for Techno's comfort "Sure."

After about the third time Phil left, Tommy started getting impatient. That should have been a surprise to approximately no one. And it wasn't. Techno was surprised that Tommy lasted so long.

(He, while not being impatient, had already asked Phil multiple times if he needed backup or if he wanted Techno to come with him. Each time he was turned down.)

"Phil," He whined one night when they were camping out deep in the woods of a huge server where two of Phil's contacts lived. "This shit is getting boring. Can I go with you?"

“No,” Phil said immediately, then grimaced. “And it’s not because I don’t want you to, but these people... they’re paranoid bastards. They barely trust me. Besides, throwing in an unknown variable might make them... skittish. Or violent”

“Then take me,” Technoblade said, because while he knew that Phil could handle himself well enough - more than well enough really- he didn’t exactly like sending Phil in with no backup and no real indication of where he was. If something went wrong then Techno would have no idea until it was too late.

“No,” Phil said and Techno raised an eyebrow at that. Phil never really hesitated to let him go anywhere, especially not if they were together “Techno, you need to stay here. Make sure Tommy and Tubbo don’t get arrested or set something on fire.”

“You burn down a few small buildings and houses and suddenly you’re labeled an arsonist,” Tommy grumbled, kicking at the dirt.

“What?” Phil asked, turning to him, “Tommy, whose house did you burn down, you little shit?”

Tommy paled for a second and his mouth hung open. “Oh, right. That-uh hasn’t happened yet. Yeah, I might’ve burned down Tubbo’s first house, after we joined the SMP. And uh, a few other things. But none of them were that bad!”

What the fuck? Technoblade knew that the future... wasn’t a great place. A future where Phil had killed Wilbur *couldn’t* be a good one, but just to hear Tommy so casually talk about destruction on what sounded like a huge level was... strange. It

“You burned down my house?” Tubbo asked, with a dramatic gasp. “How could you?”

“I didn’t mean to burn it all the way down.” Tommy exclaimed “It was supposed to be a joke, okay? And you haven’t even built it yet! You got your stuff back anyway.”

“You have to build me a house.” Tubbo demanded, “As retribution, I demand that you build me a new house. With a bee farm!”

“I’m not building you a house! You don’t even remember this! It hasn’t happened yet! Technically I didn’t burn down that house because it doesn’t exist yet!”

Techno turned back to Phil as the two fell into bickering over the schematics of time-travel-related arson. “Why don’t you want me going with you, Phil,” Techno asked quietly because while he did believe that it was true, there was more to it.

“I wasn’t lying about their paranoia. “Phil said quietly as Tommy and Tubbo’s debate got louder (and somehow was now related to crabs? Techno wasn’t even going to try and follow that one) “IR needing you to keep an eye on them. But also, Tech, these people are dangerous. You can handle yourself, but...”

But Tommy and Tubbo might not be able to. Even Tommy, who now had a moderately enchanted netherite sword, and considerably more muscle than he did a few months ago wasn’t a skilled fighter. It had never been said, explicitly, that Phil’s kids were a secret- Phil just... never mentioned them. Even when Techno was younger, when they were first traveling, and especially when Technoblade was first trying to control the voices. Phil was trying to keep people off their backs.

“Alright.” Technoblade said finally “But Phil, if you ever have to go somewhere too dangerous- take me, alright?”

“We’ll talk about it.” Phil agreed with a smile, and Techno snorted because whenever Phil said that, it meant they wouldn’t talk about it.

“PHIL!” Tubbo shouted, breaking the moment of tension “He’s bullying me!”

Technoblade sighed as we watched Phil go attempt to mediate whatever spat the others were having, which looked more playful than anything. Even though Tommy still shied away from Phil and hadn’t really let Techno or Phil touch him consciously, Tubbo could be annoying as

fuck, and they still had no real leads on the book, maybe he could stand to be away from his farm, or from the fights, just a little longer.

~~He isn't soft Chat.~~

Chapter End Notes

1) Technoblade and just some slices of life. He wasn't supposed to be the only person here, but he took over. He is so fun to write.

2) So, in about 3 chapters I'm introducing another familiar face. I don't think I've even seen this person mentioned as a guess in the comments, so I'm pretty excited about them getting to show up! Take a guess if you can, but I don't think many of you can predict who or how.

3) real plot is taking back over next update. Gotta leave some of the fun fluff and comfort behind (because this chapter was a little bit too fluffy- can't let y'all get comfortable) and holy cow I'm so excited, I know I always say that but I have big plans people, and some of it you won't even see coming.

4) You guys rock! Not a lot to add after this chapter! so I'm just going to leave it at I love you all and hope that you enjoyed reading this as much as I enjoyed writing it!

well how'd it get to be only me?

Chapter Summary

Tommy takes a walk. Phil... has a bad day

Chapter Notes

Little shorter chapter, but I hope you enjoy! Got some plot rolling again, yay!

I updated the tags a little, so might want to check that out! I will update character tags as characters appear.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy was tired of server hopping.

Well, it wasn't server hopping that was the issue- he'd done it before and under the right circumstances, it was fucking fun. It could be an adventure. But, when he was constantly trapped in hotels or campsites with an antsy Technoblade and a tired Tubbo, Tommy wasn't exactly having the time of his life.

~~(He didn't even want to think about the enchanted notebook nestled securely in his enderchest, heavy with the information he couldn't read and a promise to a dead man that would force him to go back to that damn server and fight the Egg.)~~

It didn't help that Wilbur was harder to find now than when he was an actual ghost.

Okay, yeah that wasn't funny yet, won't be making those jokes anytime soon. Tommy wasn't a fan of the fear, guilt, panic, hatred, unpleasant way his gut twisted at Ghostbur's memory. Wilbur, Tommy figured, was probably fine. That would make sense. As far as Tommy knew, he'd really done very little to actually change Wilbur's timeline, except speed up the leaving process by at most a couple of months. At this point, things were probably fine. In fact, it was probably best that he let Wilbur have this time, at least some of it. He'd already fucking said that.

Didn't mean that he didn't want to find Wilbur.

~~Didn't mean that some part of him didn't dread finding Wilbur.~~

"No, Phil said not to search on this server," Technoblade said firmly, drawing Tommy out of his thoughts. Tubbo was glaring up at Techno. It looked odd, on this Tubbo's face, so

unscarred and clear, with eyes that weren't dimmed by all the shit they'd been through. Not to mention that glare was laughable, really, more like a little kid glaring than any real threat behind it. Maybe it was because Tubbo no longer looked like he'd been to hell and back. Maybe it was because Tommy knew Tubbo, at best, could maybe land two hits on Tommy these days, let alone Techno.

Maybe Tommy was just used to the anger that Tubbo had carried for months, that watching this version of him glare up at an unimpressed Technoblade almost seemed a little funny.

But, it would have been funnier if Technoblade wasn't being an absolute emotionless bastard. Techno seemed to vary between nice enough and maybe, just maybe someone who cared, too distant in the same conversation, and apparently, he was stone-hearted today.

"What do you mean?" Tommy demanded, joining the argument "That we can't ask around for him on this server?"

"Phil said we shouldn't," Techno said plainly "So we aren't going to,"

"Why the fuck not?" Tubbo snapped "I thought that part of this whole thing was looking for Wil! We've barely been doing that."

"No, we're looking for translation book" Technoblade corrected, crossing his arms. "Finding Wilbur is a *bonus*. He's an adult. He's fine."

Tommy scowled. That wasn't exactly untrue- he'd said the same things himself, but that didn't mean Tommy didn't want to know that for a fact, not just an assumption.

He'd never really gotten a chance to heal, a chance to process Wilbur's death in the future, and then he'd been back and things were fine, and then Wil was gone again and Tommy's head was still spinning, and he felt like he was walking with only one leg.

"Of course," Tommy said with a scoff, pushing off the bed. "That's right. I forgot that you don't actually care."

"I never said that." Techno snapped back, turning away from Tubbo, who was still glaring "I'm just sayin' that the purpose of what we're doing right now isn't about Wilbur. Besides, Phil said that he got the admins to check the whitelist when we joined- Wilbur has ever even applied for whitelist here. There is *literally* no point in looking for him"

"I'm sorry if it sounds like you don't care, Techno." Tubbo snapped "But you only seem to care because Phil asked you to."

Techno threw his hands up "I don't have to stand here and take this from you two"

He stomped out of the room, slamming the wooden door behind him.

"Bastard." Tommy snapped, staring at the shut door. "I want to say that I can't believe him but-"

“Be quiet.” Tubbo cut him off harshly “My head hurts and I’m tired of you shouting and shit. I’m taking a walk.”

Tommy flinched slightly. Tubbo sounded tired and Tommy felt guilty. He’d been waking everyone up with his nightmares and Tubbo had been trapped with him for days. Tommy shouldn’t have been surprised that Tubbo needed a break. He didn’t stop Tubbo as he pulled his shoes on.

Tubbo stormed out of the room too, leaving Tommy behind, with a growing headache of his own.

Great, he’d managed to piss both of them off in the about two hours since Phil had left again. He glanced around the room and huffed. No point in him being here since he was alone and bored. Besides, they’d probably want a break from him anyway. He really was just annoying, wasn’t he?

Tommy grabbed a coat and left, slamming the door shut behind him, even though the room was empty.

The city they were in was nice. It was obviously well cared for and well established, with tall walls all around the outskirts to keep mobs out. The walls were made of cobblestone, which Tommy commended them for, but they still couldn’t quite meet the beauty of what L’Manburg’s walls had once been.

As he walked near the perimeter, looking at the somewhat short walls (L’Manburg’s had been so much taller) , he felt just a bit like he was back in those early days, or during the election. Everyone had been stressed then too. He and Tubbo had one hell of a fight then, not nearly as bad as some of the ones in Pogtopia about Schlatt or like the one at the community house, but at that time it had probably been their worst one to date.

And today he and Tubbo hadn't even really fought today, not really, but it still hurt just a little.

“You just annoy people, Tommy. You’re too loud. Too reckless. No one really cares”

Yeah, he wasn't a fan of those memories, thank you very much. Tommy took a deep breath, trying to dispel the tension in his chest. He wasn’t in exile. Dream wasn't there. Tubbo *did* care about him.

Tommy’s stupid mantra was sort of working, except, okay, he wasn't paying great attention to his surrounding, when he ran right smack into someone. He went sprawling to the ground, landing painfully on his back, while the other bitch managed to stay upright, even if they stumbled a bit.

“What the fuck.” Tommy shouted as he sat up “What where you're going, you bitch.”

“I think you ran into me,” The other person said, sounding both a touch amused and annoyed. Tommy froze at the sound of their voice, even as they offered a hand to Tommy to help him up “So really you should be the one apologizing.”

Dark brown hair, dark sunglasses, and an amused grin looked down at Tommy, who was frozen, mouth hanging open. “Eret?” he finally managed, ignoring the offered hand as he scrambled to his feet.

He immediately wanted to smack himself on the forehead as confusion crossed Eret’s face. Dumbass. Eret had no idea who he was. Of course not. This Eret had never been his friend. Had never been a traitor. Had never been king. This Eret didn't know him. That didn't stop the way Tommy's heart leapt into his throat.

“Sorry, I don’t know an Eret.” Eret- or the Eret look-alike said, frowning a bit. “You must have me confused with someone else.”

Tommy’s scowl twisted with confusion. What the fuck? Why was Eret lying about this? Eret looked almost exactly the same if just a touch less depressed than the last time Tommy had seen him. Eret seemed genuine too, though Tommy knew first hand that assuming anything Eret said was the truth could bite you in the ass.

Finally, after what was probably an awkward silence, where Tommy was just gaping at what was technically a complete stranger, he managed a “Sorry, you just look a hell of a lot like someone I know. An uh, old friend.” .

Eret’s frown turned into a slight smirk that reminded Tommy painfully of the old L'Manburg days. Eret hadn't smiled like that since... since the betrayal. “Well, I’ll bet your friend doesn’t have these, do they?”

Eret pulled down their glasses and Tommy only just restrained a flinch at the white eyes staring back at him. They’d always freaked him out, just a little, and seeing them now, when Eret apparently wasn’t even Eret, was worse. They were pure white, like snow, and despite having no pupils or any shit like that, Tommy always felt like they were staring directly into his would. It was fucking creep and made Tommy's skin itch.

He must not have done too well of a job of hiding it, because Eret, or whoever it was, laughed as they put their glasses back on and briefly clapped a hand on Tommy’s shoulder “Yeah, thought so. Hope you see your friend again soon though”

Eret pulled away, and took about three steps towards the actual street, rather than the perimeter alley before he paused “And watch where you're going! Not everyone is as nice as me.” Then, in a few steps, he rounded the corner and was gone.

Tommy was only a few seconds behind Eret, but by the time Tommy got out into the mostly empty street, Eret was gone.

Phil was about ten seconds away from throwing his fucking notebook into the river off to the left of the tree he was sitting under.

He'd crossed off six of his seven names, and gotten practically nothing from any of them, other than confirmation that the rumors were real- or at least that Everton hadn't made the rumors up- and that no one knew jack shit about where the stupid translation book was.

Of course, two of his old contacts (Phil would hesitate to call anyone on the list a friend these days- if he'd ever considered them a friend) had refused to speak to him at first. Two more had lied straight to his face and thought they could get away with it. Of course, Phil could be very persuasive, if he chose to be.

And in the case where that didn't work, he had other, less... pleasant methods of persuasion.

"Listen Philza, I don't want any trouble today-"

"Then don't give me a reason to give you any." Phil said simply "I'm just asking questions, nothing more Martin."

The man shifted uncomfortably in the alley where Phil had cornered him, trying to look away from Phil's unrelenting gaze. "I already told you I don't know anything," he said finally, his green eyes looking anywhere but Phil's. The streets were practically deserted since it was just past sunset. Phil hadn't planned on visiting Martin til morning- he wasn't quite desperate enough to be flat-out rude just yet- until he'd seen that very man heading straight for the edge of town, bag in hand.

The bastard had been trying to run out on him.

"I don't believe you." Phil said lowly, "That's absolute bullshit and we both know it. You might be a decent liar when you aren't terrified out of your enderfucking mind."

Martian shook his head. "Phil, I swear I don't know anything! I've heard rumors that it exists, but that's it. Nothing more. Nothing more I-"

Phil twisted Martin's arm roughly, snapping it cleanly at the elbow. The other man let out a scream of pain, muffled by the hand Phil slapped over his mouth. "I'm not in the mood for your bullshit tonight," Phil said almost pleasantly as he dropped his hand. "Johanna told me that you had seen it. So either she lied or you're lying and as much as Johanna hates me, she's not a liar. You, however, are."

"You broke my arm," he whispered hoarsely, looking dangerously close to passing out. The older man was weak- he'd never really fought a day in his life, not even against zombies, always living in towns or cities where guards or existing precautions would keep the

monsters at bay. He'd always been a books man, raised in cities with walls and good lighting. He didn't know if Martin had ever even killed a zombie.

His power, his protection, had always been information. Usually, it was good, if you paid enough diamonds or emeralds, but you had to watch him, the slippery bastard. "Tell me what you know and maybe I won't snap the other one."

"I haven't seen it." Martin whispered "I swear on my life, I haven't seen it. I lied to Johanna about that. But, uh, I do know someone who has seen it. I don't think she has it, but she's seen it. She wanted it for herself, so I don't know if she'll help you but-"

"Who is it." Phil pressed. "Spit it out, fucker."

"It's her." Martin whispered, finally "It's He-"

"Are you fucking with me?" Phil interrupted, his heart thundering in his chest because Martin didn't need to finish that sentence, not with the fear in his eyes. Not with that name. . "Because if you are I don't appreciate it."

Martin shook his head frantically. "No! No, I swear, I swear I'm not. Even I wouldn't send you to her without a reason."

Phil let out a string of curses. He stared at Martin and released him, shoving him roughly toward the entrance. Martin stumbled, crying in pain as his useless arm was jostled. "Get the fuck out of my sight," Phil said. "And tell no one about any of this"

Martin vanished around the corner. Phil watched him go, feeling something far too much like fear.

He hadn't killed the asshole though. That might've been a touch too much if he had.

But in the last almost two months, essentially all he'd ensured is that none of them, not even Hastin, who was one of the most serious book collectors Phil had heard of, had never seen the book. No one fucking knew anything and Phil was starting to feel like he was chasing a ghost.

Or maybe two ghosts.

Because Wilbur seemed to have vanished. No server they'd joined, and they had joined several, had any indication that Wilbur had joined. Of course, the world was massive and with Wilbur ignoring all the messages that Tommy was sending (Phil supposed he didn't know who Tommy was sending messages to on a regular basis, but the look on Tommy's face every time he checked the communicator was enough for Phil to put the pieces together).

They weren't putting everything into searching for him, since Tommy had assured him that Wilbur should be fine (though the look on Tommy's face every time he talked about it made Phil just a little uncomfortable with the fact that Wil was off on his own). Not to mention that if there really was some sort of strange fucking Egg that Tommy needed to go fight or some

explanation for what the fuck had happened to Tommy to get him back in time, well, Phil wanted it.

He needed it. Tommy seemed fine, physically, but one time traveler had already disappeared from Phil's house and it made him just a little fucking nervous. As time went on, Phil felt like Tommy would probably be fine, but, still. Phil sometimes felt like Tommy was going to vanish if they weren't careful. And regardless, if Tommy had to go fight this stupid egg, Phil had to help him.

It was because of the way that Tommy fucking flinched away from his touch and if he or Techno moved too fast or too suddenly, Tommy would freeze up. Tommy varied from practically clinging to Tubbo to refusing to let anyone touch him. He would swing from happy and cheerful to defensive and angry in seconds, for no apparent reason.

And Phil knew it was, at least in some way, his fault. Of course, whatever it was he'd exactly done to Tommy (because even if he'd disowned Tommy, there was more than that- Phil knew that Tommy wasn't telling them everything), it was... terrifying.

Of course, Phil hadn't actually done it yet. And he wanted to say he wouldn't, that he would never kill Wilbur (and he certainly wouldn't do that. Phil would drive a sword through his own chest before he even considered driving it through Wil's) but somehow he had. Whatever he had done to Tommy in the future, he wasn't sure what it was. He wasn't sure why he'd done it.

~~Like he hadn't been angry at Tommy, so fucking angry like he hadn't been close to spewing angry words at Tommy after that fight. As if Karl busting in hadn't derailed what could have well been something horrible.~~

And Phil wanted to know exactly what he'd done, so he could ensure that it never fucking happened again.

But, apparently, the universe wanted Tommy to come back but had no need to help them get the damn translation book so that they could read whatever the fuck information Tommy apparently needed to know.

Phil rubbed a hand over his face, snapping the book shut angrily. He was frustrated and he could tell the boys were too. Technoblade and Tommy had gotten in no less than three screaming matches in the last two weeks and Tubbo was getting testy as fuck to everyone. He'd told Philza to go suck a dick (rather angrily) two days ago, just before he'd left, and hadn't apologized before Phil left.

Phil couldn't even blame them, and his own temper was fraying terribly because he was getting jack shit on the information front. And, Phil was on the last name he'd been given. The book collectors and information collectors he knew were limited, and those that would likely have any idea where the book were even fewer. And unfortunately, all of them, besides Everton had said that he needed to head to her.

Phil put the book back in his inventory, and stood up, popping his back as he spread his wings. He'd left the boys much farther behind than he'd normally, but Phil had hoped that he

wouldn't even have to join this server. Unlike the others they'd joined, this one required a whitelist. Phil already had one and it had been easy to get the boys whitelisted. Too easy, Phil thought, considering the usual scrutiny required to get in.

Though for the most part Phil just hadn't wanted his kids to scare his contacts, or, worse for his contacts to find out and then spread information Phil didn't want spread, this time, he had to be certain that they didn't follow him.

Phil had hesitated for them to even come with him, but he wasn't sure he had a choice, if he refused to let them come with him on the server at all, he was almost certain that they'd follow somehow, just to spite him.

He'd already told them to avoid asking about Wilbur. He'd made a small white lie- Phil hadn't checked the whitelist, but he was almost certain Wilbur wouldn't have joined this server and probably hadn't even considered it- to keep them from going out too much. Attracting attention on this server was the last thing they needed. Phil was going to do plenty of that himself.

The house was just as Phil remembered it. Made of blackstone and quartz, it was a stark contrast to the wood that made up most of the other structures in the town around it. It was three stories high, with large balconies on the top floors that cast a shadow on the road in front of it. It had taken a few days of quietly asking around, out of earshot of the boys-even Techno- to know that this is where he would find her. The properties were scattered across this server and countless others, but she'd always had a liking for this one in the colder months, since it was located just close enough to a desert to stay warm and open, but not completely sandy.

"There aren't many trees here. I like the way you can see for miles on end, all directions. It's safer- you can see everything coming."

Phil wished he didn't remember that.

Phil had his bucket hat pulled low, and for once his sword was strapped to his side rather than in his inventory. His wings were pulled under his cloak, mostly so people wouldn't look too hard at him. Wings in this town would only get him stares. He was certain that he was getting some strange looks- just walking straight up to the door of the house. Most people didn't dare try that. They knew who lived there.

There were no men guarding the door, but Phil was certain that someone lurked not far from him. In fact, he could just see the faint shimmer of someone using an invisibility potion off to his left. He ignored them, but kept his hand near his sword, and was grateful for the glinting armour under his clothes. He hadn't really worn it much, the enchanted netherite set, not just out and about, but here, well, Phil would take it.

Phil raised his hand to knock and waited. Phil wasn't afraid exactly, no, he could get out of here alive and well. But there was dread pooling in his stomach nonetheless. He had sworn it

wouldn't come to this, years ago. Nothing could ever be so important that he'd need to do this. He'd thought he could handle anything.

He'd been wrong. He hated being wrong.

A moment later, there was a hiss of redstone and the door opened on its own, likely just to show off. Phil set his shoulders, wings pulled tightly against his back, and stepped into the house. The entrance room was grand, glittering with signs of wealth and taste, with golden accents and diamond fixtures that made Phil's heads spin. It was also terribly empty and impersonal. As he made his way across the cold floor, Phil counted at least three easy exits and two more than he could take in a pinch, not counting the door behind him.

It was too quiet in the house and his footsteps echoed a little too loudly as he made his way up the steps, a familiar yet foreign path to the office he knew was just at the top.

He didn't see another soul as he strode through the house- they'd probably cleared out the second he stepped 100 blocks within the house, turning themselves invisible or leaving altogether. Phil couldn't quite blame them. He would kill them if he needed to and they all knew that.

The office door was dark and made of stone, rather than wood. It was pretty and terribly heavy. There was a slight divot near the handle that hadn't quite been shaved out. Phil knew his own sword had done that, once. He was surprised they hadn't replaced the door entirely.

The door was cracked ever so slightly, and Phil knew that was as much invitation as he would get. He pushed it open, not allowing a moment of hesitation. He wouldn't hesitate. Couldn't.

Behind the familiar dark oak desk, sat a woman who was facing the door, hands clasped on the desk like she had been expecting him. Phil was sure she had been.

"Philza." The woman said, and if he didn't know better, she would have almost sounded kind. Kindness was far from the truth. It was a pretty fucking lie. Phil had fallen for that, once, and it had cost him a life. "It has been *far* too long."

Chapter End Notes

1) Well gang it is hell week and I am growing in assignments, so have this slightly shorter chapter. Hopefully, in about two weeks, my free time is going to considerably increase.

2) Eret was not supposed to be here. They were not the character Iwa s referring to, but he just snuck right in. They will not play a huge part, but I do have a few plans for them now.

3) Phil's backstory is 100% made up and won't really involve SMP characters pre-techno and Wilbur adoption. Which if you want to read a little bit more about how that went down, [here](#) is what I imagine, since I may never flesh it fully out in writing. Who knows, maybe I will!

4) I'm loving all your guesses for characters! So far I think I've only seen one or two people guess right! (though I suppose if you said Eret you weren't wrong lol)

5) how are we feeling after all the angsty lore recently? We ready for this weekend? I'm not lol.

6) I love you guys! Hydrate, get some rest, and please don't skip school to read this! Any comments, kudos, or bookmarks are appreciated but never required.

i know what it means to be on my own

Chapter Summary

people have conversations. Phil isn't happy. Tubbo threatens someone's elbows.

(also I saw a crow and figured it was a sign to post this)

Chapter Notes

enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

As Philza stared at her, he personally thought it hadn't been long enough. There wasn't enough time in the world for it to have been long enough. "Heza." he said, hoping that he didn't sound quite as hesitant as he felt. He hadn't spoken that name in years- hadn't thought it either, in a very long time. "It has been a while. You look as young as always"

Heza's smiled widened and sharpened like a predator sizing up her prey. Phil clenched his jaw refusing to break eye contact "You look tired, Phil. And I honestly thought I'd never see you here again, not after you vanished on me all those years ago. I half-feared you were dead, there for a time."

"I'm still kicking." No thanks to you, Phil thought bitterly, but he bit back his scathing remarks. Bringing that incident up would gain him no ground. "And I *sincerely* doubt that you really thought I was dead Heza. I didn't hide that well."

The woman's snow white wings twitched slightly behind her, and she just tilted her head in acknowledgment. "I was concerned for you at first, but I then heard of a man with dark wings who had a... terrifying protege. I knew that it had to be you, Philza."

Why the fuck couldn't these people just leave Techno out of it- couldn't they understand that he hadn't wanted this life for his son? He would never begrudge Technoblade who he was, *what* he was, but Phil would never have chosen the voices, the warfare for his son. But it hadn't been a choice. Phil had done his best to keep Techno alive and sane. He wasn't sure it had been enough.

"Of course," Heza continued, unaware, or more likely uncaring that she was striking a nerve. "I saw his work- he is sloppier than you, more feral, but I've seen him fight, Phil. I knew that

style instantly. You trained up a *wonderful* successor.” Something like guilt and anger rolled in Phil’s stomach, but he didn’t waver. Don’t let yourself react to her, or she’ll latch on.

Heza sighed “Shame I heard he was taking a break- not even bothering with Hypixel tournaments these days.”

“He does what he wants,” Phil said dismissively as if he hadn’t left Technoblade at an inn two days ago, charged with making sure that everyone was alive and safe when he returned “If he wants to farm potatoes I can’t fucking stop him. But he isn’t why I’m here, Heza.”

“Oh, I’ve heard. You’re looking for the translation book.” Heza said, leaning forward “You have some old journal you want to be translated, isn’t it? That’s what Martin said anyway. It was odd, when I spoke to him, he was favoring his left arm.”

That fucking bastard. Martin was always a weasel- if Heza offered a decent price, then, of course, he’d spilled everything Phil had told him, even with Phil’s threats. At least Martin hadn’t known it was for his kids. Heza didn’t necessarily know about them, then, beyond Techno who she thought was nothing more than his successor.

Phil just prayed that for once in their lives, the boys had actually listened and weren’t hanging out somewhere nearby, just waiting to get caught. “Martin told you right.” Phil allowed, despite the anger burning in his chest “I don’t know that the book I want to translate is important. It’s definitely not an enchanting book or anything of the sort. No power, just... some old dairy I found.”

Heza hummed “Well, as much as I would love to believe that Phil, you’ve been all over the world, countless servers, all for a dairy? Come on now. You know that I’m not stupid enough to fall for that.”

“There’s nothing to fall for Heza” Phil said, letting a hint of heat seep into his voice. “I’m telling the truth. Not my fault that you can’t believe it.”

“They say that seeing is believing,” Heza said coyly, “Care to show it to me, Phil?”

Phil crossed his arms “I don’t have it on me, Heza. And even if I did, I wouldn’t show it to you.”

Heza let out a light laugh that felt like nails on a chalkboard. It took every ounce of his self-control not to cringe, or let his wings shudder from discomfort. “Oh Phil, I missed how blunt you are.”

Phil couldn’t say he missed much at all about Heza, especially not the way her pale grey eyes seemed to bore right into his soul. “Do you know anything about the book? I’m getting a little tired of chasing something that may not exist.”

“Well, I can tell you that it exists, Philza,” Heza said, as she studied her fingernails briefly. “And, since I’m feeling so generous after seeing an old friend after so long, I’ll even tell you who has it, for free.”

Nothing was ever truly free with Heza- Phil had learned that the hard way too when he was young and naive and far too good with weapons for his own good- but arguing might make things worse.

“And who would that be?”

“Oliver Jones. He’s a ship captain who loves to collect. I heard rumors he had it and naturally, I was intrigued. So, I went to see him. He refused to let me in his collection room, but I am certain that he has it.” Heza admitted. “I halfway thought about killing him for it, but ultimately it wasn’t worth it, since I really had no need for the book itself, other than to just have it.”

“Thank you.” Phil said stiffly, and for a split second, he thought he was going to get to walk away, that for once, just once, he would actually be lucky. “I appreciate your information, Heza, but if that is all-”

“Wait” He wasn’t. Fucking hell. “Philza, I’m afraid that we aren’t done.”

“You said the information was free, Heza. Am I not allowed to leave?” Phil asked sharply, his wings flaring slightly.

“It was.” she smiled again and her wings stretched and something in Phil’s revolted at how clean her wings were. How white. It made her look too pure, for what she was. Phil’s wings were at least black. Dark. Wing color really meant nothing, but it couldn’t be helped that people thought it did. It didn’t stop people from thinking she was some sort of innocent “And while I certainly would not stop you from leaving, I think you may want to stay for this next bit.”

“I take it that this isn’t free.” Phil’s voice was neutral, carefully neutral, but the anxiety of owing Heza something twisted in his gut.

“I’m feeling patient, Philza. Generous even. The information is. He resides on the Greyheart SMP. Which, as you know is nearly impossible to get whitelisted for if you don’t have a connection with one of the admins. Philza, for as well connected as you are, you’ve been gone a long time. You can’t get in, not even with Technoblade’s help and your own terrifying power. They’ll never let you get close enough. But, since you were one of my dearest friends once, I can get you a whitelist pass. For a price of course.”

“What’s the price? Emeralds? Diamonds? I’ve got plenty of that, mate.” Phil asked, and the words tasted like ash in his mouth. He knew that it was futile to offer those things, but he could hope. The stacks he’d collected, just for this weighed heavy in his inventory, even if he couldn’t technically feel the weight.

Fuck this. Fuck everything about it. He felt like he was sixteen again. He was sixteen and his flock was gone, lost to the damned war, and Phil had a bloody sword and battered wings and a single stack of gold he got from the underground fights he did and Heza was standing there offering him vengeance for all he’d lost and somewhere to call home. He’d been a lost fool and she’d been someone for him to be loyal to.

He felt just as lost, just as unsteady, except this time there was no secret layer of what she would ask. There was no secret debt he would have to pay with years of his life and a glowing heart on his chest.

This time Philza had no false notions that Heza cared. That he would be safe here.

Heza leveled him with a look that was vaguely disappointed and Phil hated that it made his skin crawl. She didn't get to make his skin crawl anymore. He was his own person "Philza, please, I know you're smarter than that. My price never changes."

"I can't offer that currency any more. Not even for you Heza." If Phil killed these days it was on his own terms. It was for his people. It was for Technoblade or Wilbur or Tommy or Tubbo, and never for the reasons that Heza would ask him. Phil had given that up.

"Unfortunate, then," Heza said, holding up her hand as if to inspect her nails. "I know you've been looking for this book for what, five, six weeks now? Sad to see you get so close, yet so far."

"I can get in." Phil insisted because perhaps he could. He'd tried once, and been denied, but Technoblade was far more famous now than Phil had been when he tried. Perhaps they'd let Techno in, if no one else. Or maybe he could even hire someone, lie about their purpose, and tie their tongue with emeralds and diamonds.

"Perhaps you can." Heza said, "But I've heard that the rebellion is sending out...recruiters. Young, strong boys, even humans, are very useful to them. Of course, you know that recruiting is an awfully kind term, isn't it?"

Phil's blood turned to ice in his veins.

He had already been on edge but when she brought them into it- all of them-it snapped something in Phil. In a split second, he'd lunged across her stupid desk, sending everything on it crashing to the floor and yanking Heza from her seat, slamming her against the wall with a noise of rage, as his wings flared out. It isn't rational, a part of him thinks, not at all "What makes you think I won't kill you right now instead, you bastard?"

Heza looked unphased, even as Phil dug the edge of his blade into her pale throat. "Go ahead, Phil. I won't stop you. I can't. But when I respawn, I will ensure that you never, ever get that book. I may not have it, but I can ensure that at the very least you nor anyone you have ever known gets to step foot on that server."

And it was true. He might be the Angel of Death, and he could kill as many people as he wanted, but Heza... Heza had made him what he was. She was far older than him and while Phil could beat her in a physical fight any day, and perhaps had just as many monetary resources, due to years of grinding, she had more connections than Phil could hope to have even with his years of peacemaking. If he wanted that book, if he wanted to keep his sons away from her... Phil lowered his sword and then dropped her without any preamble. It gave him a perverse burst of pleasure to see her rub at her throat as she got to her feet. He hoped that the thin line he'd cut into her throat was uncomfortable.

He found himself back in front of her desk, as she settled into her chair again, looking only slightly ruffled for his attack.

“What the fuck do you want from me.” Phil ground out

“That's better,” Heza said with a pretty smile, and Phil's nails dug painfully into his palms.

“There's a small faction uprising against the ruler in East Craft City. I have some... agreements with that faction if they take power.”

“You want me to topple a government?” Phil asked incredulously. “That's a hefty fucking price, especially since I'm just one man.”

“You've done it before.” Heza countered. “And as much as you like to play house, I know you're not nearly as soft as you like to make people think. If you don't want to do it, of course, you can just walk away.”

But he couldn't, could he? He couldn't and they both knew it.

“What are the details?”

It had been almost three days since Tommy had come across maybe-Eret, and he'd spent very little time in the room since. He'd spent the rest of that first night being a minor menace, stalking the streets with no destination in mind, just trying to keep the vision of white eyes and blackstone rooms out of his head.

He hadn't gone back to the room until well after dark, where Technoblade and Tubbo were already sleeping or at least pretending to do so. Instead of pushing his luck, Tommy slept on the floor, with a coat balled up for a pillow. He woke up only a few hours later, as the first rays of dawn peeked over the horizon, stiff and cold, with tears streaming down his face. At least it was silent tears, easily wiped away, with neither Tubbo nor Techno any the wiser. He wasn't exactly sure what he dreamed of, but the faint echoes of ‘It was never meant to be’ in his mind told him enough.

He slipped out of the room with the rising dawn, not bothering to take anything beyond his sword, some bread, and a few gold ingots, and spent the rest of the day wandering the large city, half hoping he would run into Eret, half hoping he wouldn't. He didn't and tried not to dwell on the strange mix of emotions he felt when he came up empty-handed. He wasn't even sure why he wanted to see Eret again. He wasn't sure he did. He still got in late, but this time Tubbo was curled up in the chair and the bed was open for Tommy. He tried to swallow down his guilt as he climbed in.

Tubbo caught him before he could slip out the next morning and said he was coming with him. When Tubbo grabbed his hand in the street, pulling him off to see some random shit a vendor was selling, that was more than any apology was worth.

Tubbo also hadn't asked, yet, what Tommy was looking for, as they roamed the streets. They didn't buy much of anything, just because it was useless, but they browsed, and Tommy's

eyes lingered on a stall selling bandanas in the marketplace but hadn't bought them. He wasn't sure if it would hurt more or less to have those back.

Techno was pretty much avoiding them which was fine by Tommy, who had only bothered to say a fuck off to Techno since their last fight. Techno spent most of his days outside of the city anyway, doing ender knows what, coming back smelling just a little of blood. He was probably destroying mobs or pillaging some poor asshole's mine.

"What are you looking for?" Tubbo asked suddenly, nearly startling Tommy into a heart attack. They were eating lunch, etched high up on the roof of a building that looked like it was once some sort of store that had gone out of business between then was a loaf of bread, some mutton, and a few cookies spread out on the jacket that Tubbo had abandoned in the midday sun.

Tommy choked on his cookie briefly, "What the fuck are you talking about?" he managed, feeling like he'd coughed up what felt like an entire lung. Fucking respiratory system shit.

"You've dragged me halfway around the city." Tubbo pointed out "We've been through half the alleys and you looked disappointed enough to cry or some shit last night"

He halfway debated lying- He hadn't really given Tubbo much about the future, trying to feed him the fun parts and gloss over the less fun things, because Tubbo... Tubbo didn't need to be scared of Techno. Or worry about maybe being Schallt's kid because Tommy wasn't going to let any of that happen.

"It's nothing," Tommy said, "Just some stupid future shit that doesn't matter."

"It's making you jumpy. And irritable. So it matters." Tubbo insisted, pinning Tommy with blue eyes that were still bright in a way that made Tommy's chest ache. "Tell me."

Tommy shook his head, unable to look at Tubbo. He wasn't sure he could make himself lie about Eret, not in any way that was convincing. There was just...too much there. Eret was the start of the end.

"Tommy, c'mon, I'm not stupid," Tubbo said, sounding a little irritated. Tommy's frown deepened "I know that you haven't told me everything- you wake up screaming half the time for ender's sake- and I've heard Phil and Techno talking, when they think we're sleeping. I... I know about Wilbur."

Tommy paled a little at the look on Tubbo's face "Tubbo, I-"

"Why didn't you tell me?" Tubbo asked, and Tommy didn't miss the way his voice wavered just a little, not sounding angry just... sad. Ender fucking damn it that was far worse than angry. "Did... did I do something in the future? So that you couldn't trust me?"

Tommy blinked, reeling back. What the fuck? Is that what Tubbo thought? Really? Of course, it was, Tommy considered after a second. Of fucking course that's what Tubbo thought. "That's the stupidest thing I've ever heard," Tommy announced loudly- loud enough that the birds on the rooftop across the street took flight. "I trust you Tubbo- you're my best

friend dickface- I just...the future is kinda shit, you know? It wasn't exactly kind for either of us, at times and-."

Tubbo scoffed, cutting Tommy off "Don't tell me you're trying to protect me or some stupid shit like that. That's lame. Tommy, you don't have to protect me."

Except Tommy kinda did. He had to make sure that things didn't happen the same way. He had to make sure that none of that shit that happened came between them. That he never told Tubbo that the discs were worth more than him. That Tubbo never thought that he died at Longsteadshire.

"Really, Tommy, come on." Tubbo insisted, clambering over their food to sit right beside Tommy. "Just tell me. I can take it. I'm not going to sit here and know nothing while you get all angsty and rumpy. It makes you shout and makes my headache worse."

Tommy let out a long sigh and shit, he'd always given in when Tubbo gave him that look. "Fine, but don't be a bitch about it. I saw.. I saw someone. His name is Eret. Or at least, that's what they told all of us. I saw them, about three days ago, on the street. Ran right into the bitch, and knocked them over, like the pussy that he is. But, they claimed that their name wasn't Eret, even though I'm almost certain that it was them."

"So you're looking to see if they're still in the city?" Tubbo asked, "Were they your friend?"

Tommy let out a laugh "Yes? No? They...so there was a war, right? Or, a shit ton of them, really, but the war for L'Manburg independence was... one of the most important ones. And one of the earliest."

"There were wars?" Tubbo asked "And what the fuck is L'Manburg? It sounds stupid."

"It wasn't stupid." Tommy snapped, the defense rolling off his tongue as more of a reflex than anything else. "It was.. It was the country Wilbur founded so that we could have freedom and shit like that. Dream didn't want us to have independence and after a bunch of shit it turned into war."

"That sounds like fun!" Tubbo exclaimed, and Tommy winced because at the time when the war first started, it had seemed fun, It had seemed cool. And in some ways, it had been.

"It... well. Eret was on our side for most of the war, but then... Dream offered her Kingship of the SMP. They betrayed us." Tommy said and was horrified to find that his voice cracked halfway through. "Eret's betrayal led to you, Wilbur, me, and Fundy losing our first canon lives."

Tubbo paled and leaned against Tommy, not exactly hugging him, but Tommy welcomed the familiar feeling of. "What the fuck?"

Tommy swallowed down a sob. He wasn't going to cry, like a pussy. "Yeah, it...wasn't exactly a fun time. But we moved on! We won the war and shit, and uh, Eret... Eret was sorry I think. That doesn't fucking cut it of course, but..."

“That’s shitty. Why would you want to find them?” Tubbo asked, scowling at the street below them like it had personally offended him.

Tommy huffed “I don’t think I’m really looking for them, I.. I just wonder what the fuck they were on about? And maybe.. I dunno if I want to find them or not”

.” Are we going to kick their ass if we find them?” Tubbo asked, eyes narrowing in a familiar way that startled a laugh out of Tommy.

“No! No? What the fuck? Nah, this Eret hasn’t done any of that shit yet, and... and we were friends once, you know? Eret was cool and shit..” Tommy shrugged. “I dunno, maybe we’ll have to later, but right now... nah.”

Tubbo hummed “Well, I won’t beat the shit out of them yet but if you ask, I’ll come for his elbows.”

“What the fuck Tubbo?” Tommy laughed, letting out a laugh. “What does that even mean?”

“I’ll come for his elbows idiot,” Tubbo said, driving a sharp elbow into Tommy’s side as if to prove a point. “And if you keep keeping stuff from me, I might come for yours.”

“Is that a threat Tubs?” Tommy teased “What, can you even reach my elbows? I’m a big man!”

“I absolutely can,” Tubbo said “If I get your ankles first. Or eat a bunch of bonemeal and get tall as fuck. What will you do then, huh?”

“I’ll still be taller Tubs, I’m the biggest man, you can’t even get close to me.” Tommy teased and something relaxed in his chest, as Tubbo tried to tackle him.

Tommy definitely didn’t buy two bandanas on the way back that night.

He definitely didn’t tear up or any pussy shit like that when Tubbo immediately put his on.

Technoblade wanted to be on his potato farm. Or in Hypixel. Or on literally any other server than the one Tommy was on.

He was about ten seconds away from strangling the kid because apparently all he knew how to do was yell. And sure, he’d been feeling sorry for him, and maybe he had been dealt some crap in the future, that didn’t exclude him from a little bit of friendly homicide, did it?

No matter what Chat said, he obviously didn’t care about Tommy. You can’t care about someone you want to strangle, right? He didn’t even know what the Cain instinct was, let alone why anyone would spam it, so that wouldn’t change his mind *Chat* .

And he wasn’t really worried that Tommy was coming in late and going out early, now dragging Tubbo with him, no, he was only a little worried because he was technically

responsible for them, and technically he was supposed to make sure they didn't die. Whatever. They were the ones that accused him of not caring.

And no, he wasn't hurt about that. That would be stupid because they were right.

He was mostly just helping Phil and Tommy, because the kid was interesting and Techno pitied him, because who wouldn't pity someone who often looked like a kicked puppy.

That was it.

No, he *wasn't* in a bad mood either.

Technogrump.

E

E

E

e

e

E

blood

e

E

Someone's pissy

Technoblade grit his teeth as Chat changed to an old favorite, just spamming e, for no reason. Great. He slammed his axe through the head of a zombie with ease.

When was Phil getting back?

Phil was the only one who didn't get on his last nerves all the time. And Phil was always much better at handling Tommy anyway.

Techno sighed as he scanned for other mobs, but honestly, he'd cleared the area pretty well, especially after spending the last few evenings clearing them out. He allowed his axe to fall back into his inventory and tilted his head, letting his neck crack. He wished he had his mask and cloak, but he'd been trying to forgo those, along with his crown, so that he was at least a little more under the radar.

He started making his way back towards the walls of the city, which he kinda just starting to hate on principle when something rustled behind him on the open dirt path. Chat screamed and Technoblade had his sword drawn before he was even turned around.

It was Phil.

Technoblade relaxed. “Phil, finally. I’m glad you’re back. The two brats are drivin’ me nuts.” He said and was sure that Phil could hear the note of relief that leached into his tone. Phil took a step closer and the relief that bloomed in his chest turned to something cold. “Phil are you okay?”

His eyes instantly scanned the forest behind them, beyond them for a threat. For something that was chasing Phil, something that would cause the look in Phil’s eye that looked a little bit too much like the one he had when something went wrong in battle. There was nothing, and Chat was being useless, just screaming, but providing no imminent threats.

“Phil,” He demanded again, as Phil remained silent, only wandering closer “Are you okay?”

“Yeah, I’m fine, Tech,” Phil said finally, and despite how normal Phil’s tone was, how cheery, something felt wrong. “Just... got a bit of bad news.”

“You didn’t find the book.” Techno guessed.

“Well, mate, sorta.” Phil said “I know where it is. Who has it? Problem is, it’s got a closed whitelist none of us are on.”

“That is a problem,” Technoblade agreed. Maybe if he could get close enough to someone with a-

“Yeah, but I have a... well, I certainly wouldn’t call her a friend, but I know someone who can get me two whitelists,” Phil said with a shrug. “I just have to do her a favor.”

“What sort of favor?” Techno asked because Phil was a good liar, but there was a hint of something bitter in his tone like it tasted bad in his mouth.

Phil looked up, into the darkening sky, and for a moment Techno didn’t think he was going to answer him, which would have been an answer enough. But eventually, he heaved a sigh and looked back at Technoblade “The kind that means I need you to take Tommy and Tubbo to a different server and stay there until I come back.”

“Absolutely not.” Technoblade said “Phil I’m not letting you go alone. We can send Tommy and Tubbo off then we’ll do whatever it is you need to do and-”

“No, Tech, mate, listen. I’m glad I caught you out here.” Phil said, grabbing Techno’s arm. “You can’t help me. I have to do this alone.”

“Why?” Technoblade pressed. He never knew exactly what Phil had done, but he’d heard stories. “I can help you, Phil-”

“I know, I know.” Phil said placatingly “But I need you to take care of Tommy and tubbo more. Make sure that they get off this server and that they’re fine.”

“Phil, they can take care of themselves for a few weeks.” Technoblade argued, “Their lives will be in less danger.”

“Not necessarily.” Phil said “Hez-I don’t exactly have a choice here, Techo. There are probably already recruiters in that city, waiting to grab Tommy, Tubbo, and whoever else they can if I manage to piss her off.”

That was like a bucket of cold water. Recruiters could mean a variety of things, but if Phil was worried, traffickers might be a better term. “What if I go for you?” Techno offered, even though he knew exactly what Phil would say, he had to offer.

“No, I have to do this, Technoblade,” Phil said. “I don’t want to, but this is my deal, mate. Not yours. Help me by taking Tommy and Tubbo somewhere. Anywhere. Just don’t leave them alone. I’ll send you a message when it’s over.”

“Phil, wait”

“I’m sorry, Tech. I don’t want to do this any more than you want me to do it alone.” Phil said as he stepped back “I can’t stay the night- it’s a twelve hours flight and I need to make it by lunch. Just- be safe and don’t tell the boys exactly what I’m doing.”

Before Techno could even press for more information, on what exactly he wasn’t telling Tommy and Tubbo, Phil was off, back into the night sky.

Great.

Chapter End Notes

1) Heza is not supposed to represent any character we know. this is just me making up more backstory because I think it's fun. We should shift away from that within the next 2 or so chapters if this isn't your thing, which is understandable. I am pulling away from OCs as I know that's not why we are here, I just needed a couple to flesh this out.

2) This wasn't supposed to be posted until Wednesday (it was only halfway done this morning) but I had to cope with Ranboo's lore somehow.

3) y'all I don't have much to say tonight, other than finals are descending so I'm not sure when the next chapter will be. Or when Eret will officially return. Not for a while lol, sorry!

4) Check out the updated tags! Added a couple of things, lmk if I missed any big issues. I will also be adding character tags as people show up, so that way there isn't a disappointment for anyone expecting those characters to show up.

5) I love you guys! Drop a comment, come talk to me on [Tumblr](#), send a carrier pigeon whatever! I love hearing from you guys! Have a good day/night and remember to take care of yourself. <3

my heart was never pure

Chapter Summary

author attempts to write a fight scene

(don't mind I had to repost this because I forgot to title the chapter)

Chapter Notes

enjoy! <3

This chapter is brought to you by post-finals haze and Ranboo's stream.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Get up,” Technoblade said gruffly, as he stormed into the room, which really wasn’t necessary, because Tommy had jumped out of bed the second the door had slammed open, instinctively reaching for his sword, which was halfway across the room. Damn rules.

“What the fuck man.” Tommy snapped “It’s like, the middle of the night?”

“I’m sleeping,” Tubbo mumbled from where he was relatively undisturbed under the covers. Oh the joys of not having developed battle reflexes yet, Tommy thought, perhaps a touch enviously.

“Well, you need to stop sleepin’ and get up,” Technoblade said as he swept through the room, already picking things up and storing them in his inventory. “We’re leaving.”

“What do you mean, we’re leaving?” Tommy asked, putting his hands on his hips “Where’s Phil.”

Technoblade’s expression, while okay, not *notably* different, darkened slightly. If Tommy hadn’t spent quite some time learning to read Techno’s microexpressions living in the Arctic, he probably wouldn’t have even noticed. “Phil is... Phil’s coming later. He has things he needs to finish up.”

“You mean he isn’t coming with us.” Tommy demanded, “Where the fuck is Phil?”

No, that *wasn’t* worry in his tone, because Phil was fine. Phil was always fine. If Phil wasn’t fine. Technoblade wouldn’t be getting them out of here- he’d be burning the server down. Phil had to be fine, because even if there was a solid possibility that Phil was going to turn on

him later, when he inevitably found out all the shit Tommy had done, Phil... Phil right now seemed to care. And Tommy, despite everything that had happened, didn't want Phil dead.

"He's fine," Technoblade replied, which didn't answer the question that Tommy had actually asked, and didn't really assuage his fears, because Technoblade looked tense. Angry. Or, tenser and angrier than normal at least. "He just got held up and is sendin' us ahead. That's all."

"Why do we have to go ahead?" Tubbo asked, finally propping himself up in the bed, hair sticking out wildly in all directions. "And why in the middle of the fucking night?"

Technoblade made a noise of frustration. "Because Phil said that's what we needed to do, okay? Can you two please just listen for once!"

Techno had talked to Phil? It had to be either comm or in person, because no letters would get delivered that fast.. Anger flashed hot in his chest, and Tommy dug his nails into his palms as he tried to keep from shouting again, if only because he knew Tubbo's headache would only get worse.

"So you talked to Phil? Did he send you a message? Or did he come by and not even bother to talk to us." Tommy snapped.

Technoblade hesitated slightly before he spoke and that was all Tommy needed to know.

"Oh, so he couldn't even be bothered to tell us he was fucking off again, for ender knows how long? What's he even doing? He said it would take less than a week!" Tommy finally shouted, throwing his hands up.

"That's not what's happening Tommy- He's still chasing down a lead on the book," Technoblade said and Tommy could hear the barely restrained irritation in his voice. Good. The bitch deserved to be irritated. "And he can't take us because it requires flying, so unless we all start sproutin' wings, then we can't follow."

"And," Technoblade said, cutting off Tommy's retort, "We're going to look for Wilbur any way. I think we have a lead on a modded server he might've been to, or be on so Phil wants us to go there. He just didn't have time to explain it to everyone and we don't have time to waste."

Tommy scowled, trying to decide if Technoblade was lying, but he'd already slotted his mask over his face, apparently done with the incognito shit that he'd been (somewhat unsuccessfully), trying to pull over the last few days. Whatever. It didn't matter. Trying to run would accomplish nothing, and if Technoblade was lying for Phil there was nothing that Tommy could say that could possibly change that.

He'd get to the bottom of it though, or annoy Technoblade until the piglin hybrid strangled him in his sleep. Either way. He was pretty certain that at this point, Technoblade probably wasn't going to actually strangle him, at least not until he found out about Doomsday.

“Whatever. At least I know Phil is coming back. He wouldn’t leave *you* behind.” Tommy muttered as he tugged a clean shirt on.

“I’m not even gonna dignify that with a response,” Technoblade said coolly. “Just get your stuff together and get ready. I don’t want to fight right now. I’ll be right outside, be ready in five minutes.”

Technoblade strode out of the room stopping just short of slamming the door behind him.

“Bastard.” Tommy spat miserably and hoped that Techno could hear him with his stupid sensitive Piglin ears.

Technoblade was standing right outside the door when a few minutes later Tommy stomped out, a half-asleep Tubbo stumbling behind him. They’d packed up quickly- Tommy didn’t like to keep extra shit around. He’d picked up the habit of keeping what was on him light after, well, shit he wasn’t sure when, but after exile, he’d hardly kept anything on him, that he would risk losing. Even now, his most important possessions were stored in his ender chest- the book, a few diamonds, an emerald he’d stolen from Phil, an extra iron set of tools, and the armour Technoblade had given him. His comm was stuffed in his pocket, and practically useless since it wasn’t always reliable and the only person he’d bothered to try and message hadn’t responded even once.

Was Wilbur even reading the messages? Tommy didn’t know, but maybe he could annoy one out of him eventually.

Which was fine. He was fine. He was sure Wilbur was fine- his comm may just be busted. Or he might not have service on whatever server he was on.

Tubbo also didn’t have too much that needed to be gathered up, he’d spent most of the time staring blankly ahead and absently pulling on his clothes.

“Let’s go.” he snapped as he walked past Technoblade who was almost certainly glaring at him from under the mask. That was fine. He didn’t mind that at all. It definitely didn’t make the hair on the back of his neck stand up, even though he knew that Techno would at most put him through brutal training when they got to the next stopping point.

It was fine. He knew better than to expect Technoblade to really care, not about him, and not about Wilbur. He’d made it clear that he was only here because Phil had asked him to be, even if he hadn’t said as much. Tommy wasn’t going to take shit from someone who was basically just a babysitter. Besides, maybe if he annoyed Technoblade enough, then he’d be less surprised when, *if*, he found out about Doomsday, maybe if he didn’t care about Tommy, he wouldn’t be as angry.

Whatever/ Tommy was still pissed that Phil hadn’t bothered either, to show up and tell them what was happening to his face. It reminded Tommy a bit too much of Doomsday there too when Phil and Techno made plans that Tommy only half-understood until it was far too late to stop them.

They weren't blowing things up, obviously, and he doubted that they were going to topple a government or any shit like that Phil was probably just threatening someone, or maybe killing a bitch. Phil had done it before, Tommy knew all too fucking well. Though this situation was far from the same, he was almost certain. Especially since Technoblade was essentially dragging them somewhere to look for Wilbur all of a sudden.

Which, that was fucking weird. Tommy's frown twisted as he clambered down the wooden steps on the inn, Tubbo trailed a half step behind him, and Technoblade probably a few steps behind. Tommy resolutely wasn't looking at him, that bitch.

Technoblade had said that they weren't supposed to draw attention. That they weren't supposed to look for Wilbur, because Phil was sure he hadn't been here. So how the fuck had Phil found this out? Had he just happened across the information?

Tommy turned around because that was kind of suspicious now that he thought about it, (and shit, had something happened? He didn't think Technoblade was going to kill him, but shit, he didn't think Time-travel was possible either and how had that worked out for him?) with the full intent of bullying Technoblade in the middle of a mostly empty, dimly lit, street, with the portal glowing faintly from around a hundred yards down the road. But, instead, he turned straight into Technoblade's chest. "What the fuck-"

"No, I won't shut up." Tommy shouted, pushing away from Technoblade, "I have something to ask you, and you better not fucking-"

"Shut up Tommy." Technoblade said again, but he was looking beyond Tommy, down the street, towards the Port "Shut up and stay behind me."

Tommy craned his neck immediately, ignoring Technoblade's instructions to move, and found that the previously empty street, bar the old man who had seemingly vanished, now had one person standing about fifteen feet back.

Now, Tommy wasn't an idiot. He knew what it looked like when drunks were staggering down the street, or when someone was walking down the street all innocent, even in the middle of the night. This man was most definitely not doing any of those things.

No, despite what people thought of him, despite the way he failed about and yelled, Tommy had been a soldier, and once a soldier, always one, even if he didn't know what war he was fighting these days, and it took only a split second to know that they were ready for a fight.

"Shit," Tommy muttered, and took a step back, falling into place beside Technoblade.

"What's wrong?" Tubbo asked, pipping up from behind them, with a hint of snark. "Did the road fall through or something?"

"Oi!" Tommy yelled, instead of answering Tubbo, ignoring the noise of protest Technoblade made. "What the fuck do you want?"

"What he's tryin' to say." Technoblade cut in, not yelling, but certainly sounding authoritative enough that it made Tommy's jaw clench. He wasn't a huge fan of that tone, to be perfectly

honest, even if it wasn't pointed at him. "Is that we're just leaving. No need to cause any... unnecessary problems."

The man took a few steps forward and Tommy could now make out a few more features, despite the dark hour. The man was tall enough, around Tommy's height, and well built, more like Technoblade than Tommy himself, though he didn't match the sheer muscle that Technoblade had. He didn't see a sword but he was certain that the man had weapons ready to go at a moment's notice. Tommy didn't bring his out yet, but he instinctively reached for it in his inventory, ready to pull it out if he needed to.

"I'm afraid we can't let you go by." the man said, sounding very not sorry and Tommy sneered at him, though it was doubtful the man could tell in the dark.

"Listen, Big Man" Tommy called, "We really don't want to have to beat the everloving shit out of you, but we will and Techno here, well, he's really good at it. But, just let us go and you won't have to worry about looking like little bitches."

"How is that helping." Technoblade hissed lowly "Stop insultin' him!"

The man either ignored their argument or just didn't care. Tommy really had no idea, but he just stepped forward again, still out of striking distance, but close enough that if Tommy lunged, he could probably get to him. He saw Technoblade's sword glinting out of the corner of his eye and debated drawing his own.

Shit, he wasn't even wearing armour, was he?. Techno was probably wearing his under his cloak and outer layers like he often did. Tommy was almost certain that he could catch the faint glint of at least a chest plate under his white shirt. Tommy wasn't sure he could get any on in time, so he just swallowed hard and grit his teeth. It wouldn't be his first time fighting without armour on and he'd come out unscathed most of those times.

"See, it isn't that simple. I'm not here to cause problems. There's just a small issue with the port. Orders from above say that they're not letting people out." The man in front said.

"Now, why wouldn't the admin's just disable it, if they didn't want anyone leaving," Technoblade asked and there was no mistaking the danger in his tone. "It sounds like this is personal."

"It doesn't have to be." the man said, raising his hands in what Tommy thought was a rather shitty attempt at looking harmless, considering the sword in his friend's hands. "We aren't really here for you, Technoblade. You can go on and I won't bother you. I'm here for the other two."

Tommy caught the slip immediately. We. The man had said we. Tommy turned around, just in time to see someone creeping up behind Tubbo, who was around ten feet behind them, apparently having actually listened to Technoblade when he said to back up. . Before Tommy could even really think, he shouted "Tubbo, down!" and pulled out his sword, lunging straight for the bastard ready to grab Tubbo.

This Tubbo however, didn't have the same training, the same battlefield instincts that commanded the body to move almost of its own accord when orders started being shouted that his future counterpart did and moved, but only *after* Tommy started lunging. Tommy avoided hitting Tubbo with his sword, but just barely and missed the man almost entirely, only managing to scrape his arm.

"Oh, see, this, this seems personal. " Technoblade said from somewhere behind Tommy, and though his voice was just as flat as always, there was still anger in his tone that surprised Tommy. "I'm also a little insulted you only brought three people." Tommy risked a quick glance over his shoulder to find a third man had appeared from some fucking alley, brandishing an axe, looking right at Techno. Tommy couldn't really focus on him though, because the bastard who had tried to just fucking, child snatch Tubbo or whatever, was now brandishing his own sword. Tubbo had hit the ground and scrambled back with wide eyes.

Tommy brought his sword down towards the man, who blocked with his own, which, fortunately, was only diamond. It wasn't Netherite, so Tommy knew that his hit landed hard and smiled viciously at the man's grimace. Behind him, he heard the clash of swords that indicated Technoblade had started a fight. He didn't bother to worry.

The man he was fighting was good. He'd definitely had training, likely real training, from some sort of army, based on the way he held himself. He was stronger than Tommy too, especially in his younger body that he wasn't quite used to. Despite the training from Technoblade, both past and future (past and present? Fucking time-travel) Tommy's training wasn't quite enough to go up against someone who spent all of their time fighting it seemed. That was proven when Tommy failed to block a hit and the sword sliced against his side. It was a shallow cut but Tommy bit back a hiss regardless. No, he likely couldn't beat the man in conventional sword fighting.

However, Tommy had also been trained by Wilbur, and while Wilbur wasn't a bad fighter, his strength didn't come from traditional swordplay or tactics, no, Wilbur taught him how to fight dirty. Adrenaline pumped in his chest as he gave a feral grin to his opponent. This bastard had never fought anyone like him before.

"So how do you feel about women?" Tommy asked, as he brought his sword up to block a hit, just in time, and danced just out of range of the next swipe. "You know, I may seem a bit small, but I have tons of women after me, way more than my friend Tubbo. He's just a bit too small you know? WOMen like Big Men. Cool men, like me, not height based, that's not what I'm sayin."

The man, whose face he could see mostly due to their uncomfortable close quarters, blinked in confusion. "The fuck are you talking about?" He snapped but dropped his sword just enough for Tommy to lunge forward, feinting for the man's chest, but at the last second, as the man attempted to draw his sword up, Tommy dropped into a crouch and sent his sword right through the man's gut. He let go of his sword and let his momentum carry him forward into a roll, barreling straight into the man's legs, sending him crashing down.

Tommy easily scrambled out from underneath the man, who, while not yet dead, was certainly on his way. Tommy wasn't a sadistic bastard though and had no need to watch a

man slowly bleed to death, so he picked up the man's sword, which he'd dropped in shock, and with a grimace, drove it directly through the man's back.

It wasn't easy, or pretty, but the man, who had just managed to push himself up on all fours immediately collapsed, and a moment later, his body vanished, leaving the two swords and a bit of gold dust behind, that would be gone in a few minutes. Respawn. His jaw set. He had no idea how long it would be until the bastard was up and swinging again.

Tommy turned around to find Tubbo lying on the ground, unmoving and Tommy's heart stopped. "Tubbo" he shouted, his heart in his throat. tHe mn hadn't touched him. He'd been fine. Tommy hadn't let that bastard grab him and Tommy hadn't hit him with the sword. Why wasn't he moving? Panic crawled up his throat threatening to suffocate him, as he could only see Tubbo's still form in the dim light.

Tommy's bloody sword dropped into the ground beside him, clanging loudly on the cobblestone path as Tommy's knees hit the ground. He frantically turned Tubbo onto his back and pressed his fingers into his neck. Please ender, prime, any god that might be listening, let there be a pulse.

His hands were shaking so badly that it took him a moment to register the steady beat of his best friend's heart, blood still pumping through his veins, and Tommy slumped back. Tubbo was fine.

As the worst of the panic faded, he realized how fucking stupid he was. This Tubbo hadn't lost one life yet. If he'd been dead he would've respawned. He'd just hit the cobble harder than Tommy realized and it had knocked him out. Head wounds were a cause for concern, finicky motherfuckers, but he pulled away from Tubbo and collected his sword feeling a little bit less pure panic.

Behind Tubbo, Technoblade had already dispatched one man and had the other on the ground, boot on his chest, sword pointed at his throat and Tommy looked on with interest, still hovering over Tubbo, just in case another goon appeared out of the fucking woodwork.

"Listen, Blade." The man was bargaining "This isn't personal. Like we said, We aren't after you. That kids are the ones that can't leave."

"Bruh," Technoblade said "You ambushed us on our way out, and tried to snatch those two and kill me. How is this not personal?"

"We didn't want to fight you!" the man explained, sounding panicked. "We weren't supposed to. We were just supposed to get those two little bastards to recruiters, so that way Heza could keep--"

Before the man could finish his sentence, Technoblade slashed his throat with one clean motion, face devoid of any emotion.

That man's body didn't disappear. A final life.

“Let’s go,” Technoblade said as he sheathed his sword, sounding just as he had the entire time like he hadn’t just killed someone. Like Tommy hadn’t killed someone in the middle of the streets.”We need to get out of here before they respawn. Don’t know where their spawn point is, but we need to get out of here before they come back.” He glanced down at Tubbo and his mouth, barely visible, twisted into a frown.

Tommy’s hands were shaking slightly as the adrenaline started to wear so for once he decided to not argue. He didn’t really want to fight again. Already his arms ached from exertion they weren’t used to. “Fine, but I want you to fucking explain what that was about when we get out of here.”

“Let’s get out of here alive first,” Technoblade said evenly. Tommy didn’t argue, though he sincerely doubted that it would be an issue for Techno to dispatch them again, especially so soon after respawn. “We don’t want them tracking us through inter-server paths.”

It was unlikely they would even attempt to do so- Tommy had never heard of that happening, in reality, but he supposed that it would be just his fucking luck for someone to make him the first inter-server path murder. It was supposed to be impossible, to die between servers, but again: time travel.

“Alright Big T.” Tommy said, stowing his sword away, though he grimaced at how much of a pain it would be to clean later. “I don’t care much for getting murdered today. You’ll have to carry Tubbo though. I think he hit his head. I can carry him, of course, but you need someone to protect you two if-”

Technoblade cut Tommy off “I’ll carry him. Put on my cloak though.” He unclasped the fabric from around his neck and tossed it at Tommy, who just barely caught it “You’re covered in blood and I’m already gonna look like a kidnapper with Tubbo over my shoulder. I don’t need you lookin’ like a serial killer or traumatized child.”

Tommy looked down and saw that that was... very true. There was red splattered all over his shirt and he was sure that he probably had some on his face too. He probably looked like a mass murderer and somehow Technoblade didn’t have a drop of blood on him. Fuck the universe.

“I don’t want your stupid cloak. And I’m not a fucking child. I’m a big man.” Tommy grumbled, even as he clasped the cloak around himself. It reminded him a little too much of when Technoblade found him in the cellar after he escaped exile. Techno had wrapped him in that cloak like it was some sort of shock blanket, bundling him up and carrying him up the steps, though Tommy had been *entirely* capable of walking. It also reminded him a little of that night in the woods, when he’d sent this timeline on a shit spiral, so no, he didn’t exactly want to wear Technoblade’s cloak. Not anymore.

By the time he got the cloak situated, Technoblade had thrown Tubbo over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes, and he looked small on Technoblade’s shoulder, quiet and still. Tommy’s stomach twisted. He knew that Tubbo was fine, intellectually, and this was far from a terrible injury. Tubbo would probably come around soon enough, but he couldn’t quite keep the worry out of his chest, though Tommy wasn’t sure when the last time he hadn’t been at least a

little bit stressed about Tubbo's wellbeing was. When you get used to your best friend being on his last life, you worry about him all the fucking time.

"Come on, people are starting to stare," Technoblade said quietly and oh. Yeah. People had come out of their houses at some point during the ruckus and Tommy could see at least four people standing in windows and doors staring down at them. He scowled at them, not caring if they couldn't see him. They could fuck off.

He pulled the cloak tighter as he stepped over the body of the asshole that Technoblade had killed, only to shield himself from the cold.

Technoblade was certain that his mask and the little show he'd put on were the only reason that they hadn't been immediately descended upon by angry townsfolk, or any sort of police if they even had them. It seemed like a lame town with walls, but no police. Not that Techno minded, police and governments could eat mud, but, really? They couldn't even pull off a government right.

Maybe it was the idiot he'd fought screaming his name, or title 'The Blade' like eight freaking times that deterred them too.

Technoblade didn't much care for what they thought. He could more than handle a few people who were terrified of him, but it was harder when Tubbo was unconscious and he had seen Tommy's hands shaking. Tommy didn't look scared or traumatized, not really, but Techno wasn't sure if it was the waning adrenaline or worry for Tubbo. Technoblade hadn't really been looking but he'd heard Tommy shout for Tubbo and there had been pure panic. He hadn't risked a glance behind him, not when he had two advancing on him, but Tommy was a strong fighter, and Tubbo had his own sword. He'd taken a chance to look back when he finished driving his sword through the first man's chest and saw only one opponent, that Tommy was holding his own with.

He'd taken the next one down laughably easy. Whoever those buffoons were, they were good, but not nearly good enough to be a real threat to him. The threat came in with the other two. Even then, they'd underestimate Tommy's skill and even if they hadn't, there had only been one person, against two teenagers, which was just dumb. Technoblade also... well, if they had succeeded in taking one or both of them, or even just in hurting them, Chat was still baying for blood.

If he had time, he would have hunted their respawn point and slaughtered them for attempting to keep them hostage like that. For suggesting that Technoblade leave them behind. While Tommy and Tubbo were annoying, reckless, and definitely not his brothers, it was still his responsibility to protect them.

It was his promise to Phil. To Tommy. ~~To himself.~~

He adjusted his grip on Tubbo as they stepped into the portal, Tommy beside them. Technoblade would not hunt them down, not now. He had to get them out of the server before they sent better recruiters.

But, the bastard he'd had to kill last, who had talked too much in front of Tommy had given him a name. It wasn't much, but he didn't need much. Phil hadn't given him anything, but he'd seen the way Phil looked. He'd known this could happen- that's why he'd gone alone. Phil was trying to protect them.

But, Technoblade had sworn to himself, when he was fourteen and realized just how deadly he was, that no matter what, he would protect Phil in return. He owed Phil more than his life. Heza was a name that he nor his Chat would forget anytime soon.

There would be blood for the Blood God indeed.

Chapter End Notes

1) sorry about the long update. I am now free from the hellish chains of finals week, so I should be able to devote actual time and creative energy to something again lol. My secondary project is trying to learn to play bedwars which I am terrible at but it sure is fun.

2) Um, there will be communication, at least a little bit, soon. But things can't get fixed overnight and these people are just really bad at communication.

3) so the new character I mentioned probably won't appear as soon as I hoped, but they are coming! I already have that chapter half-way written!

4) Love you guys! You rock! I hope this chapter meets your expectations! Come yell at me on tumblr if you want. Also check out my other work (SBI gods AU!) if you need more content.

it's for the best you didn't listen

Chapter Summary

Techno learns a little more about the future, Tommy got stabbed. Tubbo sleeps. Chaos

Chapter Notes

I don't know.... just enjoy.

TW: brief mentions of suicidal thoughts

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

They made it to the entrance of the next server before Technoblade realized that something was wrong.

Now, that was a vague statement. Lots of things were wrong and Technoblade was pretty sure he could spend an hour making a list, and time travel would probably be at the top of it. More specifically he realized that someone was wrong with Tommy.

Besides the time-travel thing. And what appeared to be... trauma or something like that. Emotional stuff.

No, Tommy was hurt. Because while Tommy was wearing his coat and had managed to get a decent amount of blood on him, considering he only took out one guy. In retrospect, he probably should have realized that something was really wrong when Tommy stopped shouting, switching to a more quiet ramble, even more so when he got quiet altogether, but Technoblade was tired, alright, and he was carrying an unconscious kid on his shoulder between servers. He wasn't exactly going to look the gift horse of a quiet Tommy in the mouth, alright? Not when his chat was absolutely screaming for blood, and it was taking all of his self-control not to turn around and give them what they wanted.

But apparently, he should've because when the kid tripped over his own two feet and went sprawling, the cloak flared open and Tommy's shirt was soaked in blood.

Three times as much blood as it had been earlier. "Tommy. Are you bleeding?"

Tommy was a bit dazed "Bleeding? Oh yeah, I think maybe the guy I was fighting swiped at me a bit. It's just a scratch though, nothing that Big Man TommyInnit can't handle!" Tommy exclaimed, clambering to his feet, even as a pained expression flashed across his face for a moment.

Technoblade repressed the urge to scream. “Tommy a scratch doesn’t turn your white shirt red. You’re hurt! Why didn’t you say something?”

Tommy scowled and crossed his arms, and Technoblade watched his pitiful attempt to hide a grimace. Okay, so it was kind of embarrassing he was just now realizing Tommy was hurt.

Even if it hadn’t been very long, he still should've realized.

“It doesn't really hurt,” Tommy said dismissively. “I’ve had worse. And Tubbo’s the unconscious one! Not me!..”

“Yeah and if we don’t stop your bleedin’ you'll both be unconscious and I’m not carrying your lanky ass too.” Technoblade threatened dryly even though he knew they both knew that was a lie.

That, at least, however, pivoted Chat’s calls, which were still mainly for the blood of whoever Heza was.

Technoliar

Technosoft.

How is this kid still standing?

Technoliar

Technobro

Plot armour pog

Technosoft!

Blood?

E

Brothers pog!

Technosoft!

Technoblade was going to find a way to permanently remove Chat if they kept calling him soft. Give him the calls for blood back. He wasn't soft. He just didn’t want Tommy to die or pass out because he didn’t want to carry him. And Phil would be mad. And Technoblade might feel just a tiny, tiny it bad that he hadn’t noticed that Tommy was hurt earlier. That was it.

He wasn’t soft.

“Come on, we’re making an early stop,” Technoblade said as his chest twisted in worry (the kid was bleeding, okay, and Techno hadn’t noticed. He was a little worried that the kid might

die or something. Sue him) as Tommy seemed to take a moment to process what was being said. "I'll give you potions there."

Tommy took approximately one step forward before passing out.

Technoblade didn't believe in actual gods, but if he cursed all of them that he'd ever heard of as he managed to get Tommy's lanky form over the other shoulder, well, that was his business.

He couldn't really mind Tommy's side wound, since a) he didn't know where it was, and B0 he was carrying two teenagers over his shoulder, one of whom was bleeding profusely. Now, Technoblade had a reputation to uphold, and honestly carrying them like that wasn't doing much for it.

Because people would either think he was kidnapping them (which Technoblade did not kidnap people. Take hostage? Perhaps, but not Kidnapping) or that he was sparing them. That he had fought them and spared their lives.

And neither of those were what was happening. He was helpin' them.

And okay, maybe that wasn't any better for his reputation, but at least it didn't imply he was a kidnapper. Or getting soft in fights.

Either way, Technoblade wanted to get to a server, and fast, so that he could switch up Tommy and wake up Tubbo, and preserve his reputation.

Was that too much to ask?

For once, the probably nonexistent gods smiled down on him, because there was a server port, ready and waiting. He grimaced when he saw which one it was. The server was far from ideal, especially where the port spit you out, but it was better than the one behind them.

He also wasn't a huge fan of trying to bring two obviously injured people through a port, when they could at best be disorienting to people who weren't used to them. (and while they no longer made Tommy and Tubbo sick, it usually disoriented them far more than him) but he didn't have much choice.

He was going to kill them if they puked on his back though.

They didn't puke, but Technoblade's clothes were covered in a suspicious amount of blood by the time he got them safely onto the other server. It was going to be such a pain to get that off, if it ever came off. He'd make Tommy wash it, maybe, just as payback.

The port was in the middle of the ocean, which wasn't ideal, but a platform had been built thousands of years ago that supported it so they didn't fall directly into the ocean. There were no houses in sight, though, that was probably because there was no land in sight. Technoblade didn't want to risk setting up camp by the port- that was asking for trouble when they potentially had someone after them.

Besides, Tommy was just unstable enough that he might make a run for it if he woke p injured and dazed, and either run through the Port or off the platform, and Technoblade really didn't want either of those things to happen.

But...what choice did he have? He really doubted Tommy would bleed out in the time it took them to get to shore, but he had already passed out, so he was losing blood faster than Technoblade had really anticipated, considering how long Tommy had stayed on his feet. Tubbo was probably fine, unless there was internal bleeding, which, yikes, he had no idea if there was. But, realistically it was a risk to put them on a boat on a potentially unstable server, when they were both injured. So he'd risk Tommy running.

Technoblade gently put Tommy down, then Tubbo, and let out a quiet sigh of relief. Neither of them were heavy, perse, but Tommy was tall and both of them were totally dead weight. He had no way to easily get them to the distant shores of the world, so 'he hoped that they didn't think to check a mostly abandoned server,

This server, from what he recalled, was mostly abandoned. It was practically overrun with land mobs, due to an admin glitch. Once the admin died, it wasn't worth it to try and overwrite it, so it had been left, practically unmanaged for the last fifteen years, as the last descendant of the admin gave up to go create their own server, rather than hold together one that people hardly visited. Technoblade had used it for training before and thankfully the last admin-blood had stabilized it enough so that it wouldn't collapse any time soon before leaving.

Technobro

Technoconcerned

Blood

Blood

Brothers pog.

Big Bro Techno!

He doubted they'd even see another person, especially since he didn't plan on them leaving the platform.

Between the two, Tommy was probably worse off, at least in the immediate. So Technoblade pushed the cloak to the side and pulled up Tommy's shirt to find a nasty gash on his side slowly, but steadily pumping out blood.

"Dang it Tommy." he muttered "Why didn't you do something about this?"

Even if the kid had just taken a healing potion, that would've been fine, but instead, he'd just... decide to bleed? And say nothing?

Technoblade frowned as he pulled a healing potion from his inventory, one of the several he'd brewed before leaving Phil's and popped off the cork. He lifted Tommy slightly and

hesitated before pouring half the bottle down Tommy's throat, pinching his nose so that Tommy was forced to swallow it, rather than choke or spit it out.

After a moment Tommy, still unconscious, swallowed and let out a soft sigh. Technoblade watched with critical eyes as the gash slowly stopped bleeding, down to little more than a trickle, and considerably smaller. Thankfully it wasn't a deep cut, but it was long and would probably scar. If Tommy was just a little heavier and a little more experience, Techno would've given him the entire healing potion.

But it would be far worse to have Tommy burn up with healing magic than have a scar, so Technoblade dug through the bag that he'd packed and pulled out a roll of bandages, and managed to bandage up Tommy's side with relative ease. As Technoblade was just finishing tying the bandages on a too-still Tommy, the boy went rigid and sucked in a pained breath. When Technoblade glanced at his face, his eyes were halfway open.

"Tommy?"

Tommy's eyes seemed to be glazed over, which could be a side effect of taking a little more healing potion than the body was used to. "I'm sorry," he croaked quietly before his eyes slid shut again, and he slumped in Techno's arms. "I'll be better."

Weird. It was weird and it made Technoblade's chest ache, just a little, in a way that he didn't particularly care to think about because this was Tommy. Tommy never apologized. Never. Even when he needed to, or should. Not to mention that Tommy was almost certainly seeing someone there that wasn't Technoblade.

Not to mention the 'I'll be better,' bit. That sounded, well it sounded nothing like Tommy. Not the kid that he had known years ago, or the brash version that he'd slowly gotten accustomed to over the last few months.

But there was really little that Technoblade could do, besides wrap Tommy up in the cloak (what it was cold, and he didn't want the kid to get sick on top of a cut) and move on to Tubbo.

Tubbo was still unconscious as well, which was concerning, considering the fact that his injury appeared to be entirely head wound based. Head wounds were strange at best, in how people reacted.

Technoblade had no idea what Tubbo's tolerance for healing potions was, but it had to be similar to Tommy's right? So, he glanced at the softly glowing potion and poured the rest of it down Tubbo's throat. Tubbo, unlike Tommy, didn't stir, just slumped further and let out a soft sigh.

Great. Technoblade sighed as he pulled an extra blanket out of his bag to drape over Tubbo and then lay down on the edge of the platform. They were in for a long haul. Or, at least a few more hours.

Chat had started yet another round of E's when something shifted to Technoblade's left. His sword was up before he entirely processed that it was Tommy moving, and he relaxed, putting the sword away. The kid was hurt, but techno still didn't want him to try and come up swinging, not when his side was still bleeding a little.

"Where are we?" his words were slightly slurred as he pushed into a sitting position, squinting at Technoblade in the harsh morning light. "What the fuck did you do to me?"

Technoblade snorted, partially amused but mostly frustrated. Of course, Tommy would come up accusing him. "We're in a mostly abandoned server because you didn't tell me you were bleedin' out and you passed out on me. This was the closest, safest place I could get since I needed to make sure you didn't die from blood loss. And as for what I did- I made sure you didn't die from blood loss."

Tommy made a face at him "I was fine! I just needed a nap, since someone drug me out of bed in the middle of the fucking night! I would've been fine, Technoblade."

Technoblade couldn't help but let out a short laugh. "If you say so Tomy. Next time I'll let you wrap up your own stab wounds."

"I've done it before and it turned out just fine." Tommy snapped, eyes clearer than they had been when he'd woken earlier, and apologized, of all things. "That's not even the worst time I got stabbed! Big Man TommyInnit can handle it!"

That was supposed to be a joke, Techno was like 60% sure, but it fell flat between them because Joking or not, that... wasn't really funny. Techno joked about death a lot. Heck, he'd even joked about wanting to kill Tommy before, but knowing that Tommy had actually died, well, sometimes it made those jokes not nearly as funny as normal.

Curse his conscience and his Chat, who were just too dang attached to the kid.

"Whatever" Technoblade settled on eventually, unsure how to respond in the awkward silence that briefly fell. "Also, uh good job, back there. You took that guy out a lot faster than I thought you would."

Tommy smiled wryly. "Des[ite what this stupid weak body, thinks this is hardly the first time I've killed a man. I was a fucking soldier, wasn't I?" Tomy rotated his right arm and scowled "Ender, my muscles are sore as fuck."

Technoblade's laugh died in his throat. Tommy *was* a soldier, wasn't he? He'd hardly noticed it earlier, so focused on taking down the idiots that thought they had enough skill to take out the Blood God, that he hadn't even noticed. Tommy was loud, he was brash, he was a little bit erratic and prone to panic on occasions, but in the heat of the fight, even if he'd taken some hits, Tommy had turned around. He'd assessed the threat just as quickly as Technoblade had. He'd taken down a skilled fighter.

Tommy, for all he acted like a kid, well, Technoblade could see that he was a fighter too.

“I guess you’re right,” Technoblade admitted. “Phil told me a little bit but, how many wars has the great TommyInnit won.”

He was joking a bit, stoking Tommy’s ego (because Tommy loved nothing more than that) but really he was curious. There was more going on than Tommy had told Phil. Techno was completely convinced of that and there was nothing Tommy could say that could convince him otherwise. Besides, wars... could mean different things. wArs on some servers meant just that- armies of thousands, or sometimes it was armies of ten, fighting over nothing. In some places, wars were nothing but friendly competitions, where lives weren’t even lost.

It obviously wasn't the last one- Technoblade knew that, just from how Tommy acted. That man’s death wasn’t the first time Tommy had killed someone. He believed that easily. Tommy wasn’t quite as crass as Technoblade was about it, but Techno had glanced back just in time to see Tommy watch the body dissolve. It was the stance of someone who was prepared for what they saw.

Tommy, however, didn’t take the bait. Instead, he scoffed quietly “Not nearly enough.”

“What’s that supposed to mean?” Technoblade asked, peering at him “Just how many wars have you fought, Tommy?”

Tommy worked his jaw a moment “Oh, I don’t know. It depended on who you asked, and what you count as a war. I mean the biggest ones were the war for L’manburg Independence, the Manburg and Pogtopia war, and then, well I don’t know if you could call it war, but the Disc War happened. Then of course there was-”

Tommy cut himself off as a dark expression twisted across his face. “Well, there were plenty of other fights going on all the time.”

“Did you win them?” Technoblade pressed.

Tommy shrugged “Enough of them. Though, I don't know if I really count much of what happened a win. Will, well, I’m sure Phil told you. That happened after we won the Manburg and Pogtopia war. Didn’t feel like much of a win when our country was blown to shit and Wilbur was fucking dead.”

Technoblade snorted “That’s why I never bothered much with fightin’ for any governments. They never really work out, you know?”

Tommy let out a loud laugh that wasn't quite happy. Technoblade didn’t like how familiar that laugh was. As much as he would prefer Tommy be quiet, if he was going to laugh, Techno would much rather hear his real laugh.

“Of course you’d still say that same shit,” Tommy said and a half-grin stretched across his face, though it looked about as happy as his laugh had. “Whatever. Doesn’t matter. I’m kinda over governments these days too.”

Technoblade frowned as Tommy moved on “Is Tubbo ok? He was all quiet and shit, unconscious. Did he have a head wound?”

“Nothin’ was bleedin’” Technoblade asked, allowing the change of topic, only because Tommy did seem genuinely concerned. “I think he just hit it hard enough to put him out, but I gave him some healing’ potion, so he should be okay.”

Tommy was still staring at the form of his best friend, who Technoblade thought looked way too comfortable, considering they were laying on a cobblestone platform and frowned more deeply. “Well, I wish he’d fucking wake up already. I don’t.. Shit I freaked out a little when he went down, you know?”

Technoblade wasn't sure what was making Tommy spill this. Maybe it was the healing potion, loosening his lips for once, or maybe it was some need to just- talk- fill the silence, and Tommy was too out of it to do it like normal. Technoblade let him talk.

“It’s hard, after seeing someone be in their last life, after almost watching him die, again, to see him go down like that. I forgot, for a second, that if he died, he’d respawn. For a second. I thought-” Tommy cut himself off as if he realized what he was saying. “Whatever. Doesn’t matter. Tubs is fine. He’s too much of a Big Man to go down from such a little injury and I sure as fuck wasn't letting that stupid soldier touch him.”

As soon as the serious moment had come, it was gone, and Tommy was talking about the fight in grandiose detail and how much of a little bitch the soldier had been, and Technoblade hardly listened to a word of it. Tubbo, Tubbo, who was less reckless than Tommy, had also lost two of his lives?

His chest felt cold, despite the sun blazing down on them.

Technosoft?

RIP Tubbo

Technosoft.

E

E

Shut the fuck up he’s brooding.

No

E

Tubbo woke up not long after that uncomfortable revelation and was well enough to walk. So, they headed to the server Technoblade originally had in mind. Well, After Tommy changed out of his bloody clothes. Technoblade really didn’t want to get accused of kidnapping.

Now, okay, he did tell a tiny, tiny white lie. Or a bald-faced lie. Whatever. He had no idea if Wilbur had ever come to this server or not and Phil sure as heck hadn't provided that information. It was just a good plan to get Tommy there. Thankfully the blood loss and potential concussion made it easier to lie to them as they got closer, because Technoblade, well, he wasn't always the best liar.

He *could* lie, he just... Got a little nervous. He preferred to tell the truth and just stab anyone who gave him crap for it. Stabbing your problems was so much easier than talking to them. He should be congratulated for not stabbing Tommy when they were doing emotional stuff. It would be so much easier, really.

But, regardless, he told them that there was definitely a chance that Wilbur had at least been there and while Technoblade had no idea if that was true, he also didn't know if it wasn't true.

The modded servers were run, like Hypixel, by a host of admins, who maintained the modded mini-servers within the large one, ensuring that no deaths that occurred within any of them were actually, well, deaths. The coding and magic that went into that was far over Technoblade's head, but it was one of the most reputable places to adventure, considering they'd never had a single perma-death instance.

Any admin could mod their server, theoretically, and could add the code to prevent deaths within the mod, but it was difficult to do and even more difficult to maintain and Technoblade had heard horror stories of mods gone terribly wrong, or servers that couldn't maintain the code, trapping players in a hell world where their deaths were inevitable.

Technoblade didn't particularly trust modded servers, that weren't run by at least three people, and honestly he just avoided them in general. They were tourist attractions, or for people that wanted bragging rights without risking anything.

That seemed like a place Wilbur would go.

Besides, it would be safe enough and be interesting enough to keep the two boys occupied, once they'd learned that Wilbur probably hadn't been there until Phil got back from... well until Phil got back. He hadn't sent a message yet, but it made him slightly uneasy, knowing that Phil was probably doing something dangerous, without Technoblade there to watch his back. But, Technoblade wasn't sure if war or the two gremlins with him were worse. If it wasn't for having to carry them, he almost wished they'd just pass out again.

Oh the wonders of healing potions.

"Hey, Big Man," Tommy said, bounding up to one of the people who helped facilitate server transit. "Have you seen this asshole?"

It was a somewhat old picture of Wilbur, that was grainy and taken from a strange angle, but it looked ten times better than the sketch Techno had seen Tubbo with earlier, so he didn't say anything, as the man gave it a halfhearted once over. This was the second day on this server,

and their first day of searching. When they'd gotten there, it had been strictly showers and sleep, and neither Tommy nor Tubbo had complained much, even if they ended up having to camp in the less hospitable part of the main server. They'd trekked back to the main part, much cleaner and somehow, with renewed energy.

"Nope, sorry dude. Can't say I've seen him here. But, we get tons of people through every week. It's hard to remember faces." The guy seemed bored and uninterested "And, I don't really give a shit dude. Go try someone else."

Tommy's smile immediately dropped into a glare. "Okay, dickwad." Tommy snapped "Thanks for nothing."

The guy looked a bit offended at that and looked up at Technoblade as if waiting for Techno to say something. Technoblade just queried an eyebrow and the man looked down quickly. He was kind of a dick. Techno sighed as he heard a similar conversation happening ahead of him, where Tommy was practically shouting. In the distance, he could almost swear he heard Tubbo fake crying again.

He was not cut out for this. He hoped Phil was having a better time at least.

--

Tommy was pretty sure he'd talked to every fucking idiot on the server who worked there, and not a one of them had seen Wilbur.

He was going to kick Phil's ass for sending them on a wild goose chase.

Now, Tommy wasn't stupid, there had definitely been a reason that Technoblade had dragged them out in the middle of the night that wasn't Wilbur, and likely had something to do with the assholes that tried to stab him. Or, well, he supposed they had technically succeeded in stabbing him. Fuckers.

Tommy, unfortunately, had summered a little something called blood loss. He would've been fine, really, even without Techno pouring the healing potion down his throat, but he had gotten a bit woozy, from the slash that was perhaps a tad bit deeper than the scratch he'd initially assumed.

Listen, he got a bit distracted by Tubbo being almost dead, alright? It was a very distracting event, fuck off.

Unfortunately, his memories after that got a bit, well hazy. He remembered the guy jabbering nonsense before Technoblade killed him and he half-remembered the walk, talking to tEchno and passing out. He of course remembered the shit he'd spilled, which was honestly a little embarrassing, but the healing potion could have that effect, but Techno at least hadn't brought it back up.

"So what do we do now?" Tommy asked, from his place by the fire. He still wasn't a big fan of the whole camping thing. He'd had enough of sleeping in tents, thank you, but he was Big Man and could suck it up. Besides, he was sleeping in a tent with Tubbo and Techno, with

real blankets and food. It... could be worse. And it was getting better. "It's boring as shit waiting for Phil to get back." Tommy shifted as his back twinged slightly in response.

Still preferred a real oom though.

"Well, we are on a modded server." Techno pointed out flatly. "I thought we might give some of the mods a run."

"Really?" Tubbo asked, pushing himself up from where he'd been sprawled in the dirt, having muttered something about becoming one with the moss earlier. "You said earlier we weren't going to do that, and 'pay their scammer's fee for a half-bit adventure.'."

Tubbo's tried to deepen his voice to Match Technoblade but just ended up sounding ridiculous and Tommy cackled at his best friend's attempt to imitate the Blade.

"You two are awful," Techno said flatly, but there was no real heat behind it. "Terrible. Next time I'm going to leave you two to fend for yourself."

If Tommy didn't know better, he'd say that there was something almost fond in Technoblade's voice, still as dry as it was. But he did know better. Technoblade... didn't care about them. Probably couldn't, at least not yet. They weren't even useful to him. He'd been useful to Techno for a time, before Doomsday. That was the only reason he cared. And the shit that he'd given Tommy (and what Tommy had... commandeered from the chests) of course made him seem worth more. In the end, Tommy had kept only the Axe of Peace, because he fucking deserved it.

Everything else could go.

But now, Tommy was a best an interesting anomaly, that Technoblade thought was neat, or that Phil had instructed him to protect.

"And, eell, I changed my mind." Technoblade continued, "Is a man not allowed to do that around here? Anyway, Phil is still... occupied, so I figure it was better than sittin' and doin' nothin' even if it is a half-rate adventure. Course, if you two would rather stay here, I'm just fine with that"

Tommy grinned as he looked over at Tubbo, who was practically vibrating with excitement. "Fuck yeah!" Tommy exclaimed, "Let's do it!"

"I want to try the lava rising one!" Tubbo exclaimed "Oh, and the void one! And maybe the complete darkness one-"

Tubbo continued to rattle off all the different mods he might liek to try and Tommy egged him on. "What about the animal one? You could be a bee or some shit?" He snicked as Technoblade's face fell slightly and he brought a hand to his face.

"Get off of me!" Technoblade shouted, trying his best to get Tubbo to release his tight hold around Techno's neck. "You little monster!"

“No!” Tubbo shouted, though it was slightly muffled by his face being buried in Techno’s back. “I won’t! You have to keep me out of the pits!”

“We’re both gonna die if you don’t let go!” Techno shouted as Tommy sickered from high above on his cobblestone platform.

“Hey, look out behind you!” he shouted, causing them to spin around and fall, though not down into the deep pits that lead to the void and Tommy cackled at the stream of curses sent his way.

“I’m not a huge fan of lava.” Tommy found himself admitting to Tubbo, as they saw on top of their twin towers, overlooking the world that was slowly being swallowed by the lava below them. They wouldn’t win this time- it was too late. Technoblade was bridging towards them, but taking it slow. If any of them fell, they’d probably be unable to be rescued until the admins ended this mod. Fuck why did he think this was a good idea. Why wasn’t it a good idea? Why wasn’t he over this shit?

“Why?” Tubbo asked softly, and despite the heat from below Tommy shivered at the memory.

“I, uh, almost jumped once,” Tommy said. He wasn’t sure why he didn’t lie or deflect. Maybe it was the slight panic rising in him. Tubbo’s face was enough to know he should’ve. “But these I’m too much of a big man to think about that kind of shit. C’mon. Let’s go a bit higher. That shit is rising fast.”

He jumped to his feet and tried to ignore the look of something like pity, or concern Tommy gave him, and the lava below.

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“Tommy!” Tubbo called, zooming past him as fast as he could, now in a bastardized bee form. It was horrific and hilarious. “Look at me go!”

Tommy let out a laugh, but since his current form was a bastardized chicken so it came out as a more mangled screech than normal, causing him only to laugh harder, flapping his wing arms.

“I hate this.” Technoblade, who appeared to be almost entirely pig, glared at him. A snort escaped his mouth in if looks could kill Tommy would be six feet under. It only made Tommy laugh harder “You two aren’t even tryin’ to beat the game!”

“No of us have opposable thumbs!” Tubbo screamed as he flew back by, going in the other direction.

“I can’t believe I paid emeralds for this,” Technoblade grumbled.

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“He won’t fucking respond to my messages,” Tommy growled, angrily stuffing his communicator in my pocket, as he hopped over the giant flower, and tried not to step on the tiny tree.

“Who?” Technoblade asked as he swatted at the tiny rabbits flying around his face.
“Wilbur?”

“Well, yeah he’s being a little bitch too, but I meant Phil,” Tommy said, plopping down on the ground. “I just decided to check on him- make sure that he wasn’t fucking dead and he didn’t bother to even respond.”

“He’s probably just busy.” Technoblade offered, as he took a seat beside Tommy’ having successfully warded off the annoying rabbits. “He... said he may not be able to answer.”

Tommy scoffed. “He’d answer you. Don’t even pretend otherwise.”

Technoblade’s silence was enough validation for Tommy. Phil would answer Techno and they both knew it.

“Do... you want me to try and message him?” Technoblade asked after a moment, with a sincerity that startled Tommy.

Something burned in his chest that he didn’t want to think about. “No.” he snapped, scowling back at Techno, who looked confused. Tommy didn’t want to know if he felt bad about it or not. “Actually, I don’t give a shit. I’m going to find Tubbo.”

Tommy hoped that whatever the fuck Phil was doing, he was just as unhappy as Tommy.

Chapter End Notes

1) what up what up. This was originally one HUGE chapter now it’s two and you get the other one sometime between tomorrow and Monday once I touch it up! I can’t keep anything short lmaoo

uh yeah idk I felt like this chapter was a little erratic but the next one kinda goes hard ngl.

2) so y’all remember how I mentioned an outline a while ago? Well, I still have 2 pages untouched. Everything from chapter 19-25 was one page. 🙄

3) some brotherly bonding. some emotion talk? Wow.

Not much, but hey, it's something. I'm trying to move the plot along, but these bastards refuse to have a conversation.

4) an irl jokingly told me I should write fic for clout today. I just laughed.

5) If you want my attempts at humor, please go check out my latest fic, it is benchtrio centric and practically no angst, just humor.

6) holy shit 70k hits??? wtf is this? Like in the best way possible it does not feel real to me?? My most popular fic on my other account had like... 2k hits? maybe? Idk this is insane and I cannot get over the amazing support I get from all of you. I love you all so so much.

with blood on it's wing

Chapter Summary

Philza fun time

Chapter Notes

enjoy! it is still before midnight where I live so I delivered on my Monday promise.

TW: mentions of violence, child soldiers, war, death, blood, and injuries. nothing super graphic, but this chapter is part of the reason for the war crimes tag, so tread lightly.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Phil was *tired* .

He was far from out of shape but after days of little sleep, then spending all his time among the ranks of those he trusted less than Heza, he wasn't exactly well-rested. Not to mention this rebellion seemed little better than the government that they threatened to topple. Phil wasn't a fan of governments, not that he had ever been, but that distaste had only grown and with Technoblade's own inclinations he had no qualms about getting rid of an obviously corrupt institution, that kept a stranglehold on its people so tight they might not even realize it.

His problem came with instating the rebels as leaders, since they were no less corrupt, taking bribes and recruiting children to be their soldiers. Children, like one's training, who look at most to be Tommy's age- or his physical age, at least, fourteen, in armour that was mismatched and far too large for his frame. Phil knew his role. In three days' time, there was going to be a coup. A violent bloody coup. Phil Was the special weapon. They would employ him when the other employed soldiers, Phils would take care of them.

For now, he was left alone. They were scared of him, the older soldiers. They knew of his reputation far more than the younger ones did. They'd lived in a world where the Angel of Death was real, not just a story or whispered legend. Perhaps some of them had even seen him in action when they were young. Perhaps he had killed someone in front of them. He was unsure, but many of them, even the harshest and bravest regarded him with wary eyes. He could not say that he did not regard them much the same, even if he hid under a well-practiced friendly smile. So, they mostly ignored him, since no one was quite brave enough to give him orders. He offered his information for planning, and then stuck to himself,

remaining friendly, but certainly distant. He was not particularly out to make enemies but had no need to make any friends among the assholes.

Even when he'd seen them training, he'd stayed away. Adults were common, of course. Army defectors, disillusioned citizens, former government employees, they all trained hard. But then there were the kids.

Philza was not a violent man. He could, had, and would commit acts of violence that would make death itself cringe, but he did not relish violence. Not the way Technoblade did. Certainly not in the way that some of these men did. He did not hear voices like Technoblade did, but he was certain that if he had a Chat, they would be screaming for blood.

He could do nothing for the kids, not really. Not when there was every chance that Heza already had recruiters in the city. When recruiters were after his own sons, ready to drag them here, or worse, to Heza.

He doubted they could take Technoblade, but if Techno had not listened to him, if he was on his way here, rather than with the boys... Phil prayed his eldest son listened.

He prayed that he got them out before they tried shutting the port down. That was a trick he wasn't willing to put past Heza.

So he could not risk Tommy and Tubbo's safety, not even for other children. That was simply not a risk he was willing to take. Perhaps that would damn him, perhaps not. But they were not his to protect. Even if they were stumbling under the weight of armour far too heavy and swords far too long.

The best he could do was fight when the time came. So for nearly a week, he waited while they planned. Prepared. Every day a few new kids would be brought in, usually huddled together, or occasionally fighting. They were scared. Phil wanted to feel something besides pity for them, and anger at the woman who forced the situation, but his fear for his own children was more than that.

He could not afford to think about his fucking feelings.

The kids were, however, less afraid of him. Phil had a theory that perhaps children, no matter how old, could pick a father out of a crowd, especially a good one. These days Phil wasn't exactly sure just how good of a father he could be, considering all the things he'd done (or would do in a different life, because Phil would rather kill himself than his own son, ender damn it), but he was certain that he was not the worst and was perhaps the best, or at least most visible amongst the revolutionaries he was supposed to help.

He tried to keep his distance, only watching the so-called training when he'd had enough of the endless underground tunnels, half-assed redstone contraptions, and pretentious assholes who called themselves revolutionaries (whose ideas were far from new) that made up most of the base, venturing down into the biggest area cleared off. It had been terraformed, at least a bit, and was a huge cavern hollowed out, and they fought there. Trained.

Yeah right. As if what was happening could even be called training. It was all shit.

They gave children swords and told them not to hurt one another too badly. Armour was patchwork, a diamond helmet, and an iron chest plate. Gold leggings and a too-large wooden shield. He did not allow himself to compare that to a tiny half-piglin boy stumbling around with a too-big golden helmet on his head with stubby legs that could hardly carry his weight.

It was painful to look at. He wasn't even sure there would be a war. He hoped not. He had planned for the least amount of blood possible, pressuring leaders who thought they wanted a war into following a path of least resistance. He wasn't sure it would work. But, on occasions when he found himself on a perch high above the makeshift field, nearly brushing the tie stone ceiling with his head., he hoped that it would. These kids- hell even most of the adults- wouldn't last a minute against any sort of real army, however small both groups may be. Because the server was big. Multiple cities had their own government style. This one was a bigger city but Phil knew the numbers. Its army was only fifty or so people. The revolutionaries had maybe thirty and almost half were kids. That's why they had the fucking recruiters. To bring in enough warm bodies to at least overwhelm the army if it was called up. It was fucked up, but it was war. And this server was not known for producing fighters.

At night though, after the kids saw him, one of the braver ones dared approach him, while he was getting food from the rations. He may as well get a free meal if they were going to practically hold him, hostage, right?

"Why don't you train with us?" The boy, no older than thirteen asked, looking up at Phil in a way that he did not allow himself to be reminded of Wilbur. "How come you get to sit and watch."

"I don't think any of you could hold a candle to me, mate." Phil said, allowing his lips to quirk into a friendly smile "It wouldn't do any of us much good to put me on the training field."

"You can't be that good." The kid scoffed, trailing after him and there was skepticism evident in his tone and Phil found himself laughing as he sat down on one of the chairs, the kid standing in front of him.

"I don't look it, do I?" Phil said, removing his bucket hat with a grin that was just a touch sharp "But I'm a bit tougher than I look."

The kid narrowed his eyes and for a half a second Phil thought that the kid might argue, that he might, just like Tommy or Wilbur, accuse him of being old, or try to get him to spar, like Techno, but instead, the child decided better of it and slunk away, at the call of one of the other kids, leaving Philza and his stew alone in the corner of the loud room.

It was better, he decided, being unable to see the faces of his own boys in these children. He couldn't fucking afford to do anything different.

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Three days later, they finally decided that there had been enough preparations done. Phil had not gone back to the training field since then and had not afforded himself even a glance at the children, nor at his own comm. He had to trust his boys were safe.

Technoblade had not failed him yet. Even if he was a stubborn fucker, he usually saw reason or at least respected Phil's wishes.

Phil wasn't sure if it was trust or just blind fucking hope that let him feel peace about his boys while he suited up in his enchanted netherite, not brethren to hide it under his clothes this time. Only his green cloak provided any semblance of coverage, and even that flapped slightly in the wind. His wings were tucked against his back still as he trudged out of the shitty cave system into the cold night air, bringing up the rear of the group. Phil would take to the sky first, perching himself in the perfect place to watch over the group and come in when they needed him most.

If they needed him.

Oh, who was he fucking kidding? Without Phil, they stood almost zero chance of winning anything.

Almost ten hours later, Phil's dark wings were aching from exertion and coated in blood. Morning light was just beginning to pour over the horizon and Phil stood atop the government building, the once-white stone, now splattered red beneath his feet. He could not see his wings, but he imagined that his dark feathers were glistening with blood so thick and dark that it was hardly a different shade than the normal black. It was in the strange state between dried and wet, an odd congealment of crusted and liquid that made him want to shudder.

He'd almost forgotten how fucking horrible it felt, to have his wings covered in so much blood. In the streets below him, there was carnage. He'd been called in three hours into the fight and it had been almost too late, even with his own abilities. The army wasn't all that good- Phil had taken on worse, but the rebels had hardly any skill and practically no support beyond Phil himself.

The rebels, to their credit, had decimated around half the forces, though it was hardly a consolation, considering that the army had taken to recruiting themselves- ironically one of the reasons that the rebels had initially wanted to rebel. Fucking hypocrites. However, the rebels themselves, as he predicted, weren't great. Some of the leaders weren't even really fighting, since their plan was for them to... rid the building of all government officials who posed a threat.

Phil had been left with approximately twenty opponents and only ten others on his side who were alive, or still willing to fight after a respawn. He'd fought with worse odds.

When he appeared, he drew heavy fire. And, unfortunately, many of the men had been in their first lives. Phil had killed one particularly determined woman, with dark red hair, three times, the last, she had only a wooden sword and it was ridiculously easy to land a single hit with his arrow directly in her neck, killing her for the last time. She had been one of many that had lost two or three lives.

Thankfully, however, when they realized their hits were hardly even slowing him, and he was taking out ridiculous amounts of soldiers, they began to fall back. Reputation was a weapon itself, and thankfully he still held enough weight to scare the fuckers.

Phil himself was tired and bloody, but mostly unharmed. His armour was good- heavily enchanted and kept him well protected. The few nasty cuts he'd gotten were easily taken care of by the healing potion he'd downed in one go. He could feel the hazy effects tugging at the edges of his vision, making his skin prickle slightly, and pull uncomfortably, as his body longed for sleep.

But, Phil brushed it away. He'd sleep later when he wasn't in the middle of a fucking war zone. When Tommy hadn't just sent him a message, only minutes before they mobilized, that simply said 'fuck you'. Phil hadn't dared answer it, leaving it unread, along with the other two asking where he was. He didn't know how to respond, not with the way anger and guilt clawed at his throat. He wasn't responding on the off chance someone managed to hack the comm. That was it.

~~Perhaps war was easier than fatherhood.~~

Below him, bodies littered the street, from two sides that would not surrender. He tried not to look at the bodies that were too small, wearing armour that hung too loose, because if he wasn't careful he'd see the faces of his sons.. Phil had overthrown the government and the leader of the rebellion was in a seat of power. A new day was dawning and Phil wanted to get the blood off of his wings and get his reward.

There was no point in staying around. He had no use for the politics that would follow, nor any potential retaliation from surviving soldiers and the people of the city, who'd hidden in their houses once they saw the angel of death flying over their skies. It was fucking annoying and the fighting pointless. So fucking pointless. This is why Philza had stopped fighting wars.

Besides, he was tasked with getting the man in power, not keeping him there. So, without bothering to find any of the soldiers he'd fought for, Phil spread his wings and took flight. He paid no mind to the ache in his wings. They'd gone further on less and the blood could be cleaned out far away from the city still rumbling with unrest. They could be cleaned out closer to Heza's house and the payment that he was owed for this.

--

Hours later, Phil was holding onto two whitelist invitations. Normally they came as pings on a communicator, but he'd demanded that they get the old-style physical copies. They were harder to obtain and for that, he'd lost two of them. But, he still had two. That would have to be enough. Heza had them ready, two of them. She hadn't asked why, and unfortunately, he knew that she already knew why he wanted four. He just hoped she'd left them alone.

Not that there was much he could do if she hadn't. Sure he could come and kill her, but Phil was almost certain that she still had all of her lives, and despite his own prowess, Heza had some of the best trained men at his disposal. Killing her would likely only result in her hiring enough mercenaries for him to spend the next ten years on the edge. Maybe if it were just

him, or just him and Techno, he'd risk it. Perhaps together they could kill her altogether, but it wasn't worth it. If he got the book and could end this stupid fucking quest, he'd be happy. If this could help mend his family, Phil could swallow his pride and play nice despite how much he did not want to.

Not to mention he was exhausted. It was sheer will and adrenaline keeping him on his feet, as his heart pounded in his chest. He was almost certain that despite the healing potion's effects, he was still bleeding in a couple of places, and every breath hurt like a bitch, which wasn't a good sign. He really needed to sleep, but his instincts, human and avian, were screaming at him that this was not safe enough to even consider rest.

"Thank you." He said stiffly. His wings were crusted with dried blood- he had not stopped to wash them. He half wished they were dripping all over Heza's fucking floor so that she would have to see the blood that was spilled at her behest. He wished that he had the armour to slam on her desk from the bodies of child soldiers, but he didn't. He couldn't. He stood quietly and politely with folded blood-crusted wings, and a smile so fake he knew Heza wouldn't even try and buy it.

"Anything for an old friend," Heza said and he wanted to slam her face into the desk, to wipe the smile off. Instead, he bowed his head in acknowledgment. "And didn't you miss it, Phil? The rush? The excitement? The payoff? Do it again, and I can get you emeralds. Diamonds, anything."

Philza swallowed down a scream. "No, thank you Heza. I am perfectly content to be retired. I left life. I don't care to get back into it, not even for a payday."

Heza sighed, her eyes still trained on Philza in a way that made his stomach twist with emotions he didn't like. "I didn't think it would work. But, if you ever need or want to, you are always welcome back here."

Her tone was soft and almost kind. On anyone else, perhaps it would've been inviting. From Heza it was an enderdamned threat. "Of course. Well, I must be going, places to be, things to do, after all." Phil said with as much forced chill as he could muster.

She allowed him to get almost to the door, before calling out behind him "Oh! And send that Technoblade my way, when you see him next. I think we could do great things together."

Philza's blood turned to ice in his veins, and he didn't stop flying until he reached the town he'd left the boys in.

He woke up slowly, and his body ached in ways that it hadn't in years. The healing potion's effects had to have worn off, but Phil's bones (already lighter than a normal human's) felt heavy like lead, pulling him down into the admittedly lumpy mattress. But despite the lump digging into his cheek, Philza didn't really want to move. Sleep, good sleep, hadn't been in his life in a long fucking time and even a shitty mattress felt like heaven compared to the trees, rocks, and makeshift cots.

Maybe that was a betrayal to the nests of his youth, but damn, human beds certainly had comfort, especially when he practically fought a one-man war.

But, the sun was shining incessantly bright through the window, and it looked well past noon, so he needed to get up, even if Phil just wanted to be swallowed by the fucking bed.

With a groan he rolled himself off the bed, twisting so that he caught himself with his arms, wing stretching out behind him. They were still itchy, and a little gross, but he had stopped at a river and washed the worst of the blood and dirt off. He really needed someone else to prevent them. Perhaps Techno could do it when he finally caught up to them, but for now, it would have to do, even if they were driving him up the fucking wall.

They, at least, no longer ached. His wings were powerful and even when overexerted, always seemed to bounce back better than the rest of him. Even if the healing potion had taken away the worst of his injuries, his ribs still ached from where he'd taken a few nasty hits that his armour had taken the brunt of, but the sheer force had probably cracked some ribs.

The ugly green, purple, and blue bruises that mottled his sides when he pulled up his shirt to assess the damage looked bad, but when he pressed on his ribs, they only ached. Bruised, not broken, or, they had at least mended while he slept. He'd remembered them hurting, the day before, he'd been so tired, all he'd managed to do was strip off his dirty clothes, and collapse into the bed. The healing potion would've taken the worst off anyhow, and Phil... he'd had worse blows with less rest, unfortunately.

Phil's eyes strayed upwards and tension he hadn't realized he was holding eased slightly when he saw that he still had two green glowing hearts on his chest.

He did have to admit as his body protested the amount of movement it took to get dressed, that those days had been nearly... Ender, over twenty years ago, and while Phil kept himself in shape, his body wasn't quite as used to the constant abuse as it had once been.

Ender, was he getting old?

The voice that suggested that in the back of his mind sounded suspiciously like Wilbur.

No. absolutely not, despite whatever his boys had to say, Phil wasn't old.

He really wasn't, especially not to avians, who could live for hundreds of years, hardly aging, once they reached full maturity. Phil had only hit that in the last decade or so, so really, he was just in the prime of his life.

Of course, slow aging wasn't always the gift it seemed to be. People had thought them too powerful, and his flock (and so many others) had paid the price when he was a child.

Phil shook his head, clearing away the last of the sleepy cobwebs, and ended that morbid fucking train of thought. No need to dwell on those days, and the ache that it brought to his chest. Phil wasn't sure you ever really got over shit like that, but the ache was dull now, like the gap where a missing tooth was. He sighed as he pulled on his boots, and decided to leave

his armour off. It needed to be cleaned, and he'd probably already given the poor worker enough of a fight when he came in bloody as the grim fucking reaper.

Phil collected his items, and just as he was about to open the door it swung open to reveal the woman he vaguely remembered from the counter he'd paid at, and... was that a medic of some sort?

"Uh, hello?" Phil said, resisting the urge to grab for his sword. "Is there a problem?"

The woman, who stood at maybe Phil's shoulder height looked a bit like she'd seen a ghost. "Oh!" she exclaimed "I'm-I'm sorry to barge in but well- I thought you were dead!"

"Excuse me?" Phil said, staring at her, and let out a small laugh "Well, I'm afraid to say, or glad, actually, to say that I'm alive. What did I uh, do to make you think otherwise?"

The poor woman still seemed a bit shocked at seeing him alive, apparently, so the other woman, who was a smidgen taller, spoke up. "She came up here yesterday after you didn't check out." She explained. "Said she tried to wake up, but you didn't even stir, so she called for me. I was out getting supplies for potions that I couldn't get through trade, and was coming to see if you were still alive. Obviously, you are, so I will be going. I have other patients to see"

Phil let out a chuckle to hide just how confused he was as the curt doctor left with no other words. "I'm sorry, uh, what day is it?"

"Oh, it's Thursday." The desk woman said a bit faintly, now flushed with embarrassment. Her hands, which seemed to be vaguely clawed, wrung nervously. "You uh, have been here two nights."

Phil's eyebrow shot up surprise and he coughed, choking on his breath. "Oh shit." he said, "Uh. I'm terribly sorry about that mate, here let me pay you, uh double, for that night for trouble. And a bit extra." Phil pulled two emeralds from his inventory and handed them to the woman whose eyes widened in surprise.

"Oh, my, you really don't have to-"

"I insist," Phil said, hardly even paying attention. Shit, he was another day behind, and he was certain that Technoblade was already worried and Tommy... Tommy would be pissed. As long as they were fine, though, Phil could handle their mood swings. Wilbur's had been the worst when he was thirteen.

The woman tried to protest again, but Phil simply threw her what he hoped was a reassuring smile before darting out the door, his pack slung over his shoulder. He'd wasted too much time already.

--

Technoblade hadn't sent Phil a message.

He... wasn't entirely sure why.

Chat was demanding it, and his own instincts, his own worry, insisted that he did too. Phil had said it wouldn't take long. It had been nearly two weeks in total, and between the messages Tommy had apparently sent and radio silence from Phil, Technoblade had to admit that he was... nervous.

Worried.

He was worried about Phil and he wasn't really ashamed to admit it, at least, not to himself. Phil was in trouble, or, at least not exacting entirely of his own volition, and whoever Heza was, was at the bottom of it.

He'd not mentioned it to Tommy, who he was almost certain had forgotten or hadn't heard what the man said, or Tubbo, who definitely hadn't heard it, but he'd thought about it, at night, or in quiet moments when Tommy was off throwing a temper tantrum or hanging out with Tubbo, about who the fuck that was.

He didn't like her on principle. It was less about her trying to kill him apparently (though that certainly wasn't helping her case) no, it was more so that she couldn't even be bothered to show up herself. Or that she thought he'd just, what, walk away from them? Sure Tommy was an annoying brat and Tubbo was a convincing little shit, but Techno had given his word. To Tommy and to Phil. And to himself. Technoblade was many things, but he was a man of his word if nothing else.

He was almost certain that they were there because of whatever Phil had gotten himself into. He just hoped that the book was worth it.

He glanced at Tommy, who was currently telling Tubbo some stupid story about the future-they'd stolen something trivial or something like that, nothing important and both boys were in stitches. Techno didn't smile, but maybe... it was probably worth it, as long as Phil came back alive.

It definitely wasn't guilt that prevented him from sending a message, because that would be stupid. No, Techno just... didn't want to bother Phil. Phil probably would stop and answer him and if he was somewhere dangerous he didn't need the distraction. So he'd be patient.

Even if Chat didn't really like that idea.

"Shut up" Techno muttered quietly, bringing his hand up to pinch the bridge of his nose.
"Please, I can't take everyone screamin'"

And okay, Tommy wasn't exactly screaming, but he was loud and Techno had a headache. He spared a glance at Tubbo as he let his hand fall away, who seemed fine. He'd kept complaining about a headache off and on, over the last couple weeks, that was probably just an after effect of his head wound, but it had been almost two weeks and Techno was about to give him part of a healing pot, just to be sure everything was fine.

The kid was already a little messed up in the head. Had to be, to be Tommy's friend.

Rude

Tubbo is precious and you just can't see it

Tubbo is a chaos gremlin

Technosoft!

He literally steals from people

Blood

He threatened to take someone's knee caps, like two days ago.

Tubbo

Jfc we aren't talking about blood right now, god you're so annoying.

Bee boy

Tubbo!

Technoworried?

They were loud today, ender. What was even up?

Philza!

Dadza!

Crimeza!

Philza!

Tubbo?

We already talked about him.

Bridza!

Dadza!

Pog!

“Chat, why are you back on Phil?” Techno muttered quietly. He needed to take a walk. “I’ll be right back!” he called to Tommy and Tubbo, who didn’t even really acknowledge he’d spoken.

Chat kept up spamming Phil’s name, or variations thereof, and Techno groaned as he made his way toward the server entrance. They could use some food from the store since it was

fresher than the stuff they'd been eating. "Again, guys, Phil's not even- he's not even here! And I've already told you that I'm not messaging him!"

"Careful mate, if someone ran across you and didn't know better, they'd think you were crazy." Technoblade's head shot up, and there, standing about fifteen feet in front of him was Phil.

"Good thing you know better," Technoblade joked, even as he strode toward Phil in long steps, already analyzing him for any sign of injury. He didn't look hurt, but his cloak and tunic could do wonders to hide injuries- Technoblade had learned that ages ago.

Phil closed the gap, wrapped Technoblade in a hug that he wasn't really prepared for, but after only a moment of hesitation, Technoblade returned it. Phil was shorter than him by a considerable amount, but there was still something comforting about his hugs, it was almost like being small again, especially when Phil wrapped his wings around him too.

It also soothed Technoblade's instincts, just a bit, to feel that Phil really was there in front of him, safe, after two weeks of constant worry.

Technoblade let go first, and Technoblade noticed the wince in his movements as Phil let go. "Are you hurt?" Technoblade asked, frowning again.

Phil waved a hand "Just some bruises, nothing too bad. I've had far worse." he grinned "Still got two lives, if that's your next question, probably never risked it to begin with."

Technoblade couldn't argue that, but it still made Chat rile up, even more than they already were. He ignored them. Phil liked to hide things behind his cheery smile, but Technoblade could tell that something was off. He wasn't certain, but Phil is probably lying about something, but the middle of a busy server wasn't exactly the place to confront him about it.

"Did you at least get what you were after?" Techno asked as he turned back in the direction of his vaguely illegal campsite.

Phil grinned and from his inventory, produced two slips of paper. Technoblade raised his eyebrows. Old fashioned whitelists. "Thought they stopped making those, old man,"

"I'm not old," Phil said, as an automatic response and something relaxed in Technoblade slightly. Phil's eyes still looked tired, but at least he seemed normal enough. "Fuck off. But, no mate, they're just rare. Still out there, but hard to get. I was hoping for four, but, hey, at least I got two."

"That's good." Technoblade glanced over at him "Am I allowed to ask what exactly you had to do to get them?"

Phil shook his head. "It's not important, or interesting, really. I just did someone a favor."

"Is that boring favor why there's blood on your wings?" Techno asked, and Phil flinched slightly, his smile freezing on his face. After a moment it fell completely and Technoblade felt a little bad when he saw the look on Phil's face.

“I really... I don’t wanna talk about it mate. I’ll tell you later. But please don’t bring it up in front of Tommy or Tubbo.” Phil said finally. “I don’t...”

Technoblade wanted to press because if there was that much blood still on Phil’s wings (though it wasn’t noticeable, Technoblade had smelled it almost instantly and had seen it crusted between the feathers, only because he was so used to how Phil’s wings normally looked) then his trip hadn’t been as safe or boring as he was pretending but Phil would tell him if he had to. If it was necessary.

“Alright.” Technoblade agreed finally. “If you say so, Phil.”

“Thanks, mate,” Phil said and threw him a grateful grin, as he began to ramble on. “Anyway, where are those two little shits? We’ll need to find somewhere to leave them while the two of us join the server. Hopefully, we can leave tomorrow or the next day since I want to go ahead and start tracking down this lead while I still can. You and I can-”

“Take Tommy instead.” Technoblade was nearly as surprised as Phil, who stopped in his tracks beside Techno at the words.

He wasn’t exactly sure where that idea came from but... Techno couldn’t take it back. He wouldn’t. He really wasn’t sure if Chat or some sort of divine intervention made him spit out the words, but... it had come out. And it made sense. Tommy and Phil needed to talk or something. Techno wasn’t exactly sure. That was Phil’s problem.

“What?” Phil asked, furrowing his brow. “Techno, are you mad at me?”

Techno shook his head. Nope, he’d made a decision, he had to commit to it. “No, but Tommy is.”

“Why on Earth is Tommy mad?” Phil asked, sounding genuinely confused.

Seriously? Technoblade had figured this out, and emotional capacity wasn’t exactly his forte. “You left him, Phil. Without a word. And then ignored his messages. I don’t... I seem to remember that bein’ an issue that he brought up with you?”

Phil’s face cycled through several emotions Techno couldn’t quite catalog before settling on a grimace. “Yeah, I suppose you’re right. But, Techno, I don’t know if this exactly a safe trip for Tommy to go on-”

“Nothin’s safe, Phil.” Techno pointed out. “And Tommy isn’t a little kid anymore, for all he looks it. He’s seen wars, Phil. He can handle himself, especially with the training I’ve given him. Twice, now, apparently.”

That was a weird statement and by the look on Phil’s face he agreed that it was strange, but didn’t entirely look convinced. “Listen, if I didn’t think he could handle it, I’d go with you. I’m not mad, but Tommy... he needs this. This is all about him anyway, isn’t it? He needs to be involved, Phil.”

Phil didn't look convinced. "Trust me on this one, alright? I trusted you with this, now you trust me." Techno tried and... That seems to work. Phil's shoulders slumped. Nice.

"Alright, alright, if you say so Tech." Phil agreed and they resumed their walk. "And I suppose it would be dangerous to leave the world at the mercy of Tubbo and Tommy alone together."

"Not a word, Philza. You left me with them, alone, for two weeks this time. You don't get to say a word about it."

Chapter End Notes

1) this chapter got,,, so long. It was supposed to have more plot but Philza and his war crimes got carried away. I am incapable of being concise. obviously unedited who do you take me for.

2) I am very tired so I won't talk too much tonight, but go stream the LoveJoy Ep. I can't get One Day out of my head lol. don't be weird about it though and make it all about Wilbur lol. but the music slaps gang. it went straight on my driving playlist.

3)Technoblade came through with a solution like an adult. that should terrify you. It scared me and I wrote it.

4) I wish I could draw, because the image of baby technoblade is living rent-free in my head.

5) I love you all! hydrate! take care of yourself! come scream at me on tumblr if you want.

i turned 'round and there you go

Chapter Summary

Tommy and Phil finally have a long overdue talk.

???? has joined the game

Chapter Notes

this is a long one boys. Heavy themes throughout, mentions of blood, neglect, and all the usual stuff for this fic.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy stared at the paper in his hand and briefly wondered if he'd gotten some sort of head trauma he hadn't realized because he was probably seeing things. First of all, he was holding a retro white list, which, really, come on, no one used those. Even Dream had sent out electronic whitelists, and he obviously wasn't a shining example of how to be an admin.

Second, he was holding it.

Phil had come in, and Tommy, who had been in a decent mood, and decided that losing his shit on Phil in the like, fifteen minutes he was probably going to be there, wasn't worth it, so to be honest, he'd zoned out a bit after the whole 'Got two wishlist invitations' bit because really, obvious Technoblade was going. He wasn't stupid. And Tubbo would probably stay here (well, probably not since the admission would kick them out once Techno wasn't around to glare at them and shit) or something and just wait like Tommy had one. Ike Tommy had always done.

But, no instead the paper had been pressed into his hands, and Phil smiled at him, while Technoblade stared stoically, and Tubbo peered over his shoulder, eyes alight with interest. "The fuck?" Tommy said, which really, what a stunning response. Good Tommy. What a brilliant response. .

Phil smiled and it was more friendly than he was prepared for. (He was prepared for irritation and for yelling, not a mouth quirked up in a half-smile that looked too fond to be real.) "You're coming with me, mate."

"What about Technoblade?" Tommy asked, not quite sure that he was hearing everything right, his eyes flickering over Phil's shoulder to see Techno looming behind him. Why the

fuck had Phil not given this to Techno? Techno who look absolutely.... Bored?

Tommy's frown deepened as he took in Techno's posture. He was tense, sure, but Tommy wasn't sure he'd ever seen Techno fully relaxed, even in sleep. But instead of glaring at Tommy, in a way that he was entirely too familiar with, Techno just looked... bored. Blank. He didn't look angry, or upset. Maybe a little irritated, but that was a default expression whenever Tommy opened his mouth.

Tommy wasn't sure if that made the unease in his stomach worse. Was this place so bad that even Technoblade didn't want to go to it? No, no, if it was that dangerous, he doubted he'd let Phil go without him. They were far too attached at the hip- perhaps an off-brand version of how clingy Tubbo was- for that type of shit. So no, it probably wasn't *that* dangerous, and if Techno had wanted him dead right now, he'd have let him bleed out. Or let the recruiters take him. Or let him freeze a hundred times over or any number of times. Hell, Technoblade wouldn't even have to fight that hard to kill Tommy if it came to it.

Even if he had been training with Technoblade, his body still wasn't as strong as it once was, especially since he had to grow. Again. Fucking time travel. He'd grown a half-inch since they'd left home and he knew that he still would grow another one or two before the year was up, and it fucked his center of gravity

Besides, Tommy knew that Techno hadn't always wanted him dead. Not, that particular grudge has been Tommy's own fucking fault.

"Techno is going to stay with Tubbo." Phil said, still smiling "The server shouldn't be too dangerous, and this quest is about your book, isn't it? Besides, if you and Tubbo were alone to long, the whole server might get fucked up."

It was a joke, and maybe it was funny. It probably was funny, considering the havoc he and Tubbo were, admittedly, good at wreaking Tommy was supposed to laugh. Phil laughed and Tubbo threw up a mock protest, and even Technoblade let out a low rumbling laugh.

Tommy didn't laugh.

He couldn't. He just stood abruptly, unable to face them as something like panic rose in his throat. "Fuck off." he snapped and stomped towards the woods, half-blind with embarrassingly hot tears welling up in his eyes.

Their voices echoed behind him, but Tommy ignored them because it..it wasn't fucking funny. Or maybe it was. But it wasn't Phil's voice. Or Techno's. Or Tubbo's. It was Dream's.

It sounded too much like what Dream said. Sounded too much like Dream reminding him that the wars were his fault. Techno telling him that his betrayal resulted in the destruction of his home. It sounded too much like Wilbur and everyone else, who, while right, screamed at him that it was his fault.

They weren't really wrong. He pressed the button in the final control room. He's the one that started the wars. He's the one that burned down George's house, He's the one that betrayed Techno and got L'Manburg destroyed again. He's the one that told Tubbo to trust

Technoblade. He's the one that almost got Tubbo killed. He's the one that ruined the server. That pissed Dream off and-

Tommy didn't realize he was crying until his chest began to ache. He was crying, like a stupid baby, like some sort of pussy, feeling sorry for himself, when every bad thing that happened to him had been his fault. He'd made the others bad people. Force their hand. He started the conflict. He was the reason for Wilbur's death. He was the reason L'Manburg got blown up. He'd made the others bad. Or, no, he'd been a bad person and-

"Tommy?"

Tommy's head snapped up and there was Tubbo. Tubbo, who was still his most loyal friend. The one that Tommy hadn't said those horrible things to, that Tubbo had never fucking deserved. He'd meant it when he said he was nothing without Tubbo.

He wanted to crack a joke, as he furiously wiped his tears away, but to his horror, when he opened his mouth a sob came out instead.

A second later he had an armful of Tubbo. Tommy hadn't even really processed him moving, nor consciously decided to open his arms to catch him, but it was instinct. Tommy let Tubbo pull him into a tight hug and allowed himself to return the tight hug as hot tears leaked out of his eyes, despite his best efforts not to sob.

Fuck Tommy had to be better than this. But this was Tubbo. Tubbo wouldn't use this against him. Even at their worst, Tubbo had never used this against him.

"Are you okay?" Tubbo asked after, well, time as fucked up when you were crying, his words muffled by Tommy's shirt. Tommy had mostly stopped crying, forcing himself to take deep breaths, but his hands were still shaking more than he cared to admit because shaky hands were for weak bitches and Tommy wasn't- *couldn't afford* - to be weak.

"Clingy bitch." Tommy muttered quietly in response, even as he squeezed Tubbo briefly.

"You're literally hugging me right now, dumbass." Tubbo shot back, and Tommy felt himself relax slightly as he released the hug.

"Nah, Tubbo, you can admit you're the clingy one, it's okay." Tommy teased and was thankful that Tubbo went along with it, instead of pointing out how Tommy's voice still shook slightly.

Tommy still wasn't quite convinced that it wasn't a trap.

Now, did he have a reason to believe that it was a trap? Not really, but *honestly*, it was just suspicious. Philza, keeping with his trend of just fucking off whenever he pleased, to do whatever he wanted, all of a sudden choosing Tommy over Technoblade? Letting Tommy come along on what was probably going to be a relatively safe adventure, while Technoblade

stayed behind to make sure Tubbo didn't commit some sort of heinous crime that got him killed was just too suspicious.

And okay, maybe he was a bit paranoid.

Phil just.... To put it nicely, Phil's head had been so far up his ass for years that it was doubtful he'd pulled it out now.

Philza Minecraft was always right, even when it came to disowning and killing sons.

But again, this Phil had only mildly abandoned him, and really, this last time... he'd done it for Tommy. He'd gotten the whitelist for him, which still felt strange.

Phil ignored him for two weeks, longer if you counted the days he'd been gone before then, and then showed up and gave Tommy the other whitelist, instead of Technoblade? Fucing whiplash, is what he had, from that behavior.

And after Tommy's embarrassing as fuck breakdown (thank Ender that Tubbo had lied for him, with a much straighter face than Tommy himself could've pulled off) it had been a night of sleep, and then a day of preparing, before one last sleep on the modded server.

Tommy halfway wanted to ask for one more round. Try another mod- maybe the water-rising mod that he'd heard had just come out. It sounded like fun and Phil was here and scary fucking good at that shit. Maybe they could win one if they were all together. Besides, when Phil wasn't being a prick, he was funny.

Maybe it could've been fun. Or maybe it was a stupid idea, because none of them ever got along well, especially not when Tommy was involved. Besides, Technoblade hadn't wanted to do them, to begin with, and Phil probably thought that they were stupid. So Tommy kept his mouth shut and tried to sleep, despite the weight of the slightly crumpled whitelist tucked into his inventory and Phil and Technoblade's low voices from just outside the tent.

He'd debated trying to eavesdrop, but they were far enough away, and Tubbo was snoring just enough that it would be impossible to hear. That didn't mean that the anxiety that crawled up his spine as he wondered what they were discussing as they thought he slept, the paranoia that kept him awake long after their voices had quieted, and Technoblade's louder snores filled the area.

When Tommy had gotten up in the morning, he hadn't said anything about the dark feather coated in what appeared to be blood near the fire. He'd just tossed it into the embers and watch it burn as the others packed. It did make Tommy question what the fuck Philza actually got up to in those wings.

Trading didn't usually require bloodshed, did it?

Maybe it did. Fuck if he knew. Technoblade had always said that the only universal language was violence. Maybe it was the only currency too.

Either way, the last couple of days hadn't exactly eased the tensions, because Tommy knew for a fact that someone was keeping secrets beside him and he just wasn't exactly sure what the fuck they were.

Part of him had wanted to just give the fucking whitelist to Techno. Stay with Tubbo, who was safe. Tubbo who he could trust. Let Technoblade and Philza do their thing, just like always, because that was less suspicious. Because maybe he wouldn't feel like his skin was just a little too tight over his joints.

"You ready mate?" Phil asked and Tommy didn't jump, because he was a big man, and people talking certainly didn't make him flinch, but he did survey his surroundings very quickly as a tactical measure.

"I was fucking born ready," Tommy said, even though he really just would rather... not be doing this. It was too late to turn back. They'd left Techno and Tubbo behind hours ago, and were standing at the locked portal to the server that they were now whitelisted for.

Philza laughed and pulled out his own whitelist, which was in much better shape than Tommy's wrinkled copy. Tommy pretended not to notice the difference as he did the same.

"It's simple how to do this," Phil explained even though Tommy hadn't fucking asked. (Tommy did need to know, but it was the principle of the point, damn it) "A bit dated, but just as reliable, if not more so than the new comm ones. A hell of a lot more hassle though. You just need to write your name, and put a couple of drops of blood on it, and then throw it into the portal."

"How on earth does that even fucking work?" Tommy exclaimed, "You're fucking with me!"

"I'm not fucking with you, Tommy." Phil said with a laugh "I know it's odd, but really, kids these days. It's just an old magic, Tommy. This server was set up before I was born."

"Oh, it must be old as fuck then," Tommy said, allowing himself to fall into the familiar routine of annoying the shit out of Phil, who rolled his eyes.

"I'm not that old, you little shit," Phil said and if Tommy was any more inclined to be crazy, he might even say that Phil's tone was fondly exasperated, not just annoyed. But going crazy was more Wilbur's thing, so Tommy would keep his marbles, thanks.

Okay, that joke was only a little bit funny. It still stung a little. Not ready for that black humor yet. Got it.

"Yeah whatever, old man." Tommy teased, even as he pulled his sword from his inventory. It was a glorious thing that Tommy was still just waiting to name. He hadn't figured it out just yet, but as soon as he did, he was getting an avail and nametag. But, it was such a good sword, with badass enchantments (that he supposed Techno had done. He'd been surprised but Techno had never mentioned it, so Tommy didn't either) and ran a finger along the blade.

It was sharp as fuck so blood welled easily from the small cut and Tommy smeared it across the bottom. "Got a pen or do I need to write it in blood? Cos if I've got to write it in blood,

that sounds like cult shit, honestly.”

Phil, who had apparently just used a much smaller knife stared at him in what looked like concern for a moment, before producing a pen from the folds of his robe. Fuck off, old man. His ways were still entirely valid.

“You could’ve just picked it, Tommy,” Phil said as Tommy scrawled his name around the blood. It looked a bit like shit, but it said Tommy Innit, so what did it matter?

“Eh, easier this way,” Tommy said with a shrug and tossed the slightly bloody pen back to Philza, who caught it with ease, despite the way he was watching Tommy with a strange expression. “Whatever old man, you’re just intimidated by my brilliance.”

Phil’s strange expression vanished and Tommy relaxed a bit as he snorted. “Sure mate, whatever you say.”

Tommy was a bit too concerned to be mad, but it was far easier to pretend to be offended by that than to try and figure out what the fuck was going on in Phil’s head. “Fuck you!” Tommy shouted as he glared at Philza “Don’t disparage the great TommyInnit like that! I can smell your sarcasm from here *Philza* and I won’t stand for it!”

Phil laughed again and Tommy accepted that. Phil had always been both annoyed and amused by Tommy’s antics. Mostly annoyed it seemed, but maybe he was just in a good mood for once.

Tommy wiped his bloody finger on his shirt, ignoring the way it left a stain. Bloodstains seemed far more normal on his clothes than those without them. “But what now? I don’t want to stand out here forever.”

Traveling with Tommy was... strange.

Phil, upon reflection, had found that he’d never actually gone on an extended trip with his youngest son, alone. He hadn’t realized it until Tommy himself had pointed it out, about two hours into the new server, in passing.

“And it’s kinda weird being here with just you, you know?” Tommy rambled, waving the stick he’d acquired wildly enough that Philza was just a little worried about getting a black eye, “I never did this kind of shit with you in the future and obviously we’ve never done this. The closest is when I crashed with Techno for a bit on the DSMP, but we, uh, weren’t on great terms, so that wasn’t exactly like this. Besides Techno was practically training me into the ground, so I mostly just ate the soup you made.”

Tommy kept on rambling, having now decided to debate the types of soup and rank them, trying to determine which one was the “Pogest Soup”. Phil, however, didn’t really listen. He had almost interrupted to say that Tommy had to be wrong.

Surely, surely, they'd done something like this before! He'd taken Technoblade of course, which had turned into a bit of a point of contention, obviously.

He'd taken Wilbur on... admittedly less, but Wilbur refused to learn to fight and Phil wasn't exactly a fan of cities, but he'd still taken Wilbur to a couple of music shows in far servers when he was a kid, leaving Technoblade at home. Technoblade had really hated loud places as a child, and Phil hadn't been gone long enough to be too concerned about leaving him overnight.

And of course, there were occasions where he took Tommy and Wilbur out to trading posts, or other similar places, especially near birthdays, so that he could try and figure out what they wanted. Tubbo had tagged along too sometimes and once he'd even taken Tommy and Techno to see a dubiously legal fight that they'd both desperately wanted to see. Wilbur had wanted no part of it and stayed home with Tubbo, who Phil wasn't sure he could risk taking off the server without talking to his asshole guardian John.

There wasn't a single instance that Phil could remember taking Tommy alone.

Fuck.

Phil stole a glance at Tommy, who was still chatting animatedly about... something (was he talking about cobblestone again?) and tried to stuff down the emotion that felt like something *a little* too close to guilt for his comfort rising in his throat.

"What do you think Phil?" Tommy asked and Phil's train of thought was thoroughly derailed. "What about?"

"That smooth is the shitiest block! You waste coal by destroying a perfectly good block! They're terribly ineffective!"

"I dunno about that one," Phil said, allowing himself to fall into an argument he'd had with Tommy more than once that he could remember. It was old hat, but far safer than Phil's own mind, so he indulged. "I've made some pretty fucking sick builds with smooth stone"

Phil really didn't care much for the argument, but the tendrils of guilt wrapped around his heart eased as Tommy seemed to light up slightly at the banter, acting more himself than he had in months. He would take it, old, worn-out argument or not, and smiled as Tommy screeched in protest, spouting off about blocks that were better.

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"Where are we going, exactly?" Tommy finally, asked, as they set up camp the first night "And how fucking far do we have to walk?"

Phil didn't look up from where he was stoking the fire, trying to encourage the slightly damp kindling into a flame strong enough to cook dinner over and help ward off hostile mobs. He did his best to hide a grimace. He hadn't ever told Tommy, exactly, had he. Just said that the Greyheart SMP housed the translation book and that they needed to join. Tommy had

followed, with surprisingly few questions. Well, questions of importance. He'd told Technoblade everything, but it hadn't crossed his mind to tell Tommy.

Even though Tommy was actually with him.

Fuck.

"A pirate captain," Phil said, choosing to answer honestly. Lying would be pointless since Tommy was literally with him, not to mention how much it would probably piss Tommy off in the long run.

Though Tommy had seemed more than happy to banter, Phil would have to be an idiot to miss the tension just below the surface. It had certainly improved from those first few weeks, but Tommy still held a wariness in his eyes that Philza didn't like, and Technoblade had said Tommy was pissed. Phil had hoped the Whitelist would go towards fixing things, but he wasn't entirely sure where he stood with Tommy.

Tommy didn't say anything, so Phil continued, still working on the fire "Captain Oliver Jones. He supposedly has one of the biggest fleets, and an extensive collection of rare books and artifacts he keeps on one of the ships. We're going to meet with him. Last reports had him docking at a city about two days travel from here."

"Normally I would fly if I was alone, but since I'm with you we'll walk, or maybe see about getting some horses, in the next town over," Phil explained. "Flying is so much fucking faster though. I could probably do it in about twelve hours."

Tommy who had been listening relatively quietly, as he sat up the tent, went still. Phil paused his own work to take a glance. Tommy's shoulders were stiff and even though he was turned away from Phil.

His fatherly- oh shit I fucked up- instincts were blaring loud and clear because Tommy still hadn't moved. "Tommy, you good?" He finally asked.

"I'm fine," Tommy snapped, with enough venom that Phil leaned back in surprise. Even over the last couple of days, when Tommy had swung from shouting to laughing (though that was hardly unusual) he'd been irritated. Wary. Not venomous. Not this angry. "Sorry, I'm fucking slowing down this quest for you."

Phil's eyes widened "Oh, shit, that's not what I meant Tommy! I don't mind walking! I only ever fly on my own anyway and it gets kinda boring." That was somewhat of a lie, but Tommy didn't have to know that. "I much prefer walking with someone."

Tommy finally turned around, his face twisted into something that looked out of place on a fourteen-year-old. No kid should be that angry. That defeated. Fuck. "You don't have to lie to save my feelings," he grumbled "I know that you don't want me here. You'd rather it be Technoblade."

"That's not true," Phil said reflectively. Phil was... okay maybe he'd asked Technoblade first and Techno probably would've been more useful for both intimidation and if things went

south, but that didn't mean he didn't want Tommy here. And Technoblade had made a good point about leaving, and Phil was ashamed that it hadn't occurred to him first. "Tommy, I was just making an observation. I'm really glad you're with me. You're the one that this is all for anyway."

Phil wasn't convinced he said the right thing- getting through to Tommy had always been a challenge that Wilbur was far better suited for, but Phil was there and Wil wasn't, so he'd have to do his best. The expression on Tommy's face made him feel acutely like his best wasn't enough.

~~A small part of him twisted at that though. Wilbur had been at least somewhat right, what, if Phil couldn't even comfort his sown son?~~

"Whatever." Tommy said finally "I don't it doesn't- so we're getting the book from a pirate captain?" Tommy finally settled on, eyes too tired for someone his age.

Phil looked back down at the fire and forced a smile as the kindling finally took and sat up. "We hopefully will be able to buy the book from him." he hesitated "Or take it by force if it comes to that."

Tommy cracked a grin at that, though there was something brittle about the edges that made Philza uneasy. "Taking it by force? I like the sound of that. We can just steal shit. Who needs to buy it."

"We're going to try not to get killed, Tommy," Phil said, with fond exasperation. "Or have to kill anyone. We're trying not to commit crimes, here"

"Boring," Tommy whined, flopping back against the ground. "Where's your idea of excitement, Phil. I've always wanted to steal from pirates."

Phil laughed "Mate, that's a good way to get a sword through your chest. Pirates are vicious bastards, some of them. Trust me, stealing from them is not worth it."

"Philza Minecraft." Tommy exclaimed with something akin to accusation though it was lighthearted enough Phil allowed a grin "You stole from pirates?"

Phil... wasn't sure sharing that story was a good idea. But Tommy's eyes glimmered with excitement that overruled his wariness for the first time in weeks, so Phil couldn't find it in himself to deny Tommy that. "Well, I was probably only around eighteen and a little bit of a reckless bastard so..."

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"Fuck you, Phil." Tommy snarled, eyes blazing "Fuck you. You can't just say that you care, you have to actually show it! Words don't mean anything. Anyone can say that they care, and it can be a fucking lie!"

Phil wasn't exactly sure how things had ended up like that, with him sitting on his bed, hands up in some sort of surrender as Tommy went a little feral.

The day had been *fine* , though things were still tense after... whatever had happened the night before, and they made good progress towards their goal. Tommy had a little more bite to his tone than usual, but Phil wasn't going to complain, since Tommy was at least trying to make conversation.

It was infinitely better than the avoidance from before.

They'd managed to come upon a town at dusk that had an inn, and Phil was glad that they got to sleep on real beds, more for Tommy's sake than his own. Tommy had stopped protesting, but Technoblade had shared some time ago that Tommy apparently didn't exactly have fond memories of camping.

It couldn't always be avoided, but Phil would pay for that luxury if it helped Tommy, at least a little bit. The nightmares, from what Techno said, weren't quite as bad when he slept on a real bed.

He'd hoped that the rest of the trip would go smoothly and that things would settle between them, with some solid bonding time. That's what had always worked with Techno.

Yeah, that was a fucking stupid thought.

Tommy had taken off his shirt to change into something better suited for sleeping, and across his side was a red scar. It wasn't terribly long, but it was angry and obviously new, and before Phil even though, he was fussing over Tommy asking how the hell he got hurt, because that scar definitely hadn't been there a few weeks ago.

Tommy hadn't taken his concern well.

Obviously.

"Tommy, I don't-" Phil tried

"Shut up!" Tommy shouted and Phil hoped that the other guests wouldn't come knocking to tell them to quiet down. "Shut up, Phil. You don't- you don't get to tell me you care. Get to promise me that things will be different, then leave us for days, or weeks on end! You fucking ignore my messages, you lie to me because what? I can't be trusted? I hear you and Technoblade whisper about Ender knows what at night!"

Tommy's hands were trembling as he gestured wildly, swinging an arm dangerously close to the lantern. Philza cringed, and not just because of the fire hazard. It was more so what Tommy was saying.

"You-you only give a shit about me now, because I'm in danger! Because I made you feel guilty. About Wilbur or hell, maybe just because I finally gave you a fucking adventure! I've seen the truth, Phil! I'm only worth it when I'm useful for something and I'm sick of pretending that you- that we're okay! That you're not just using me for a thrill or a guilt fix! I'm not fucking- I'm fucking tired of being used."

Tommy's chest was heaving by the time he was done and Phil was frozen, stock still on his bed as Tommy glared at him with eyes full of unshed tears.

Those words, ender, they sounded so much like what Wilbur had thrown at him and Phil's throat was so tight he couldn't get anything out. Is that really what Tommy thought? Is that really how he felt? That Phil was only using him? To feel better about Wilbur? Or for some adventure? His chest ached and if he wasn't scared it would make things worse, he'd pull Tommy into a hug and never let him go.

"Tommy I-"

"So just stop. I said it before. Don't pretend you care. I-I didn't believe it before, and I was right. Technoblade is still your favorite. Wilbur too. So just- I'll take your help. I know that I can't do this on my own as much as I fucking want to, but just stop pretending you care, because it's crystal clear that you don't. Stop trying to use me to fix your guilt or whatever." With that, Tommy abruptly got in bed and rolled over, facing the opposite wall.

"Tommy," Phil choked, around the lump in his throat. "Tommy please- look at me."

Tommy made no signs of even hearing Philza, barring the fact that if anything, he pulled the blanket around himself tighter. Phils could see him trembling from where he sat, and he had no idea if it was rage or something else that made Tommy's shoulders shake..

He debated pushing it, just going over to Tommy, making him talk, but... Tommy was stubborn. That wouldn't go over well. So Phil just extinguished the lantern, and laid in his own bed, trying to ignore the guilt that was chewing him alive.

Was he really that bad at being a father? He'd never favored one kid over another. NEver. He'd done what he had to. Done what he'd hoped was the best for all his kids, to keep them all safe. Happy.

That had obviously been too fucking little. If two of his sons hated him so much if somehow, he'd turned into a monster that Tommy had been afraid of, then was he even fit to call himself a father?

He had one son who was convinced that they weren't even family, another who hated his guts, and a third who had proof that Phil was capable of horrific things he'd never thought he could do to his family.

He'd done his best to make it up to Tommy, flying to the ends of the earth, fighting a fucking war, and that... had made things worse? Apparently. Shit, what was he even doing? Tommy thought he *abandoned* him, that he was using him, to feel better about Wilbur. Is that all Tommy thought this was?

How the fuck did he even begin to fix that?

The next morning was awkward, to say the least.

Phil had hoped that by morning Tommy's temper would have cooled and that they could at least talk about what had happened the night before.

Unfortunately, Phil hadn't taken into consideration that this was Tommy they were talking about, so he wasn't entirely surprised when Tommy kept his mouth shut and refused to even look in Phil's direction in the morning.

Tommy was not one for the silent treatment- that was always more of a Wilbur or Technoblade move, but if Tommy ever went silent... you were in deep shit.

Phil was certainly in deep shit. Normally the silent treatment from Tommy, even if he was pissed, didn't last too long, because he wanted nothing more than to either scream at you or resolve the situation. It was lunch and either had happened.

Phil had tried to initiate conversation several times, both light-hearted and serious, and Tommy had taken none of the bait, usually just speeding up to walk far enough ahead of Phil that it would be awkward to try and converse.

It was like talking to a fucking wall.

Phil let the tension hold until they stopped for lunch. He couldn't take it any longer.

"Tommy, you don't have to talk, just listen to me," Phil said, finally, and Tommy stiffened from where he was angrily eating a fish sandwich. Tommy didn't make an attempt to move away, so Phil didn't waste his opportunity.

"Listen, I... I'm trying Tommy." Phil said honestly. "It might not be enough, and you might not believe me, but Tommy, I really, really am trying. I can't pretend to understand how angry you truly are at me. I doubt you've told me everything. I hope you have but.... I don't think so. And you don't have to. Not right now."

Phil took a deep breath. "And... you're right." it pained Phil to admit it, but Tommy had been right, at least somewhat. "I do feel guilty. I'm trying to make up for it."

Tommy flinched. Shit.

"Not like that!" Phil rushed, trying to get his point across. "Tommy, it's not about Wilbur. Well, I mean, of course, it is. Of course, I feel guilt over that, but Tommy... you said I disowned you. The guilt, it fucking... it eats me alive at night. Sometimes I don't even want to believe you, because I can't understand how I could do that. I am trying, and failing, to make up for that."

Phil ran a hand over his face "And I... I did leave you again after I said I wouldn't. I didn't mean to. I wanted to protect you. All of you. That wasn't a lie Tommy. The people I met with were dangerous and I hope sincerely that you never have to meet them. I needed to protect you. To make what I had done up to you. I-"

Phil wouldn't tell Tommy about what he'd done. He would not tell him about the soldiers he killed without mercy, on his behalf. That guilt would never, ever be on Tommy's shoulder.

Phil would rather have Tommy hate him for the rest of his life.

He swallowed hard, trying to collect his thoughts. Shit he was bad at this, wasn't he? Tommy still hadn't looked at him, just tensing more and more as Phil spoke.

"Fucking hell Phil I don't need your protection." Tommy snapped nearly making Phil jump. Though, a part of him held back a sigh of relief that Tommy was finally, finally, talking again, even if he was yelling at Phil.

"I-I needed you to be there! You swore things were different and that you cared, but then you just... vanished. Listen, Phil, I gave up on you a long time ago. Even in the original timeline, I'd already given up on you staying around for much. I gave up on you caring when- " Tommy broke himself off. "Phil, I told you before. Don't try and tell me you care, because I'm a gullible bastard and I might just believe you."

"Okay," Phil said finally. "Okay. I won't- I won't promise you anything, Tommy. I'll show you. I swear to you that I'm trying Tommy. And that I'll do better."

"No more fucking off without a word?" Tommy asked and Phil's chest ached that, for as old as Tommy was, for as much as he'd seen, he still sounded like a kid who desperately wanted his parent's approval.

And he was terrified that Phil wasn't going to give it to him. How the fuck could Phil even call himself Tommy's parent?

"No more leaving," Phil promised and it was only years of both war and parenthood that allowed him to keep the tremble out of his voice. "At least, without telling and no more radio silence, as long as I have service"

"You can't promise it," Tommy said resolutely and Phil didn't point out the way that his voice trembled. "You have to prove it."

"Okay," Phil said, nodding at Tommy from across the dying fire. "Okay."

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Phil... okay it sounded bad but Phil hadn't initially intended to let Tommy come on the ship with him.

Tommy was loud. Explosive. Angry. Tended to shoot off at the mouth and fire seemed to follow him wherever he went.

But after their talk, Phil literally had no choice. Tommy was the one who this was for, after all. Tommy was the one who'd time traveled. Keeping him out of the loop was obviously doing far more harm than good, and Phil had meant every damn word he'd said to Tommy. He'd start making it up to Tommy now, and when they found Wilbur, he'd make it up to him too.

The rest of the day had passed in a slightly less awkward fashion, as they made their way to the city where the captain was supposed to be docked with his ships. Tommy hadn't exactly

warmed up to Phil- he was still tense and had stayed firmly out of Phil's reach and conversation had been stilted. The night had been spent in a different inn and it was awkward too until Phil had nearly broken his nose falling down the steps of the inn.

Somehow, the idea of physical harm was enough to send both of them into fits of laughter that had broken the tension.

Things improved more after that, though the anger and wariness in Tommy's eyes hadn't gone away. Though, really, that had been the case since Tommy had woken up all those months ago. In the morning, they set out to find the ships.

It wasn't hard.

The fleet of ships was impressive, especially for pirates, who ran the risk of being hunted down by more legal entities. One larger ship floated in the dock, and three ships of smaller sizes flanked around it.

The largest ship, named The Fool's Luck, was imposing and the deck was bustling with energy as people appeared to be loading cargo on and off, pulling ropes and getting ready to set sail. They'd made it just in time.

"Woah. That's a huge fucking boat." Tommy breathed, staring up at the masts that towered into the clear blue sky.

Phil grinned. "Yeah, pretty impressive, isn't it. These are some of the best pirates on any server, but this one is known for navel prowess. To survive here, well, they're good."

"They must have so much money." Tommy whispered, "So much shit that they don't even know they have..."

"You're not stealing from them, Tommy." Phil said firmly, then paused, amending with "well, unless we have to. But if they catch you, they'll at best cut off your hand. At worst your head."

"Nah, I'm too good for that." Tommy said flippantly "I'm a big man, the pogest thief. So sneaky you wouldn't even notice. I even lived under Technoblade's basement for a while before he figured it out."

That was a concerning statement (why on earth would Tommy live under the basement like a fucking animal? What the fuck?) but Phil had no time to unpack it, so he just forced a grin and filed that away for a later conversation, along with every other concerning statement that Tommy had ever made.

"Well let's not test that theory huh mate?" Phil said, risking clapping a hand on Tommy's shoulder. Tommy didn't quite flinch, so Phil counted it as a win. "Now, you remember what we talked about."

Tommy shrugged the hand off his shoulder as he rolled his eyes. "Yeah, yeah, yeah, don't insult them, don't steal from them, and be professional. Well, Philza, I can assure you I can be

the most professional, well-mannered bastard out there. I was a vice-president once you know.”

The way that Tommy emphasized professional did not give Phil much confidence. Honestly? Neither did Tommy being Vice-President. “Yeah, and I’m sure Wilbur lectured you constantly about getting shit done.”

“Hey!” Tommy snapped “That’s not true. I did my paperwork at least twenty-five percent of the time, and outsourced the rest to Tubbo.”

“Course you did,” Phil said and briefly debated ruffling Tommy’s hair like he used to before... well, before, but decided against it. There was still a wariness in Tommy’s eyes, and despite their heart to heart, Phil knew that things couldn’t be fixed so easily. He’d been lulled into that false sense of security once and he wouldn’t be again.

Instead, he settled for stuffing his hands in his pocket casually and grinning at Tommy. “Poor Tubbo picking up all your slack.”

“Rude!” Tommy exclaimed “He was my subordinate! I had every right to do that!”

“Alright, alright,” Phil said, laughing slightly. The light banter was a bit like balm to Phil’s soul, that had been rubbed raw by the screaming matches of the last few days. This Tommy was far more like the son he remembered. Perhaps it was selfish, but he much preferred him to the broken, angry version that had come out only hours earlier. “If you say so.”

“I do say so, bitch,” Tommy said, sticking his nose in the air “Now come on, we need to get this stupid fucking book.”

And oh. Yeah. The reason they were there. It was almost easy to forget the real reason. Not Tommy’s issues with the future, but that stupid Egg that Phil was only halfway convinced was real.

“We’d hate for them to sail off before we got a chance to get on board.” Phil agreed “Now, follow me, and pleas, try not to piss them off too badly.”

“Fuck you,” Tommy muttered and Phil just shook his head.

Though they’d seen the ships, it actually took several minutes to find the plank the crew was using to get on and off the ship, considering the size of the bay and the sheer amount of people bustling about. Phil looked back a half dozen times to make sure he hadn’t lost Tommy, even though Tommy was nearly taller than Phil and was practically fifteen. No. Seventeen. Tommy was mentally seventeen.

Yeah, that was something else he generally shoved in the ‘shit to deal with later’ file. However, they finally made it, and stationed at the bottom of the plank was a single crew member who looked bored out of their mind.

Despite that, the second Phil got within striking distance, they were on their feet and at attention.

“And just who the hell are you?” They asked, staring at them with suspicious eyes.”What business do you have with the ship?”

Phil gave them an easy grin. His wings were tucked tightly against his back and they had no weapons on display, unlike the pirate in front of them who had a wicked-looking trident strapped to their back. “I’m Phil, that’s Tommy. We just wanted to talk to the Captain. Looking to potentially buy something. A book. We’d much appreciate if you’d let us have a chat with him, yeah?”

They stared at him and for a moment Phil was worried that he was going to be sent away. Of course, he wouldn’t actually leave, but he really didn’t want to fight an entire pirate fleet today. Thankfully, after a moment, they nodded.

“Alright, come on. We’ll take you up to the deck, and see if the Captain is willing to consider trades today.” They said. “You two walk in front.”

Tommy was unusually quiet- perhaps taking Phi’s words to heart for once at the sheer number of armed people bustling about as they walked up the think plank to the deck of the ship.

Most of the crew members hardly spared them a glance as they stopped onto the deck. “Stay here,” They said with a hard glare “You try anything and you’ll have three dozen crew members on you.”

“We aren’t trying to start anything mate,” Phil said with what he hoped was a reassuring smile.

“And if we tried something we wouldn’t be stopped by- Ow! What the fuck Phil!” Tommy whined as he rubbed the side Phil had unceremoniously jabbed an elbow into.

“Tommy. No antagonizing the people with weapons,” he said through gritted teeth as the crew member left them, casein a wary glance over his shoulder.

“Fine.” he huffed with a sigh. “I was just saying. You could probably take them all.”

“Even if I could, that doesn’t mean I want to.” Phil said, “Dude we want this to be peaceful.”

“We’re dealing with pirates, Philza.’ Tommy hissed back “I don’t know if peaceful is exactly in their vocabulary.”

Before Philza could argue, (though Tommy probably wasn’t entirely wrong) the crewmate reappeared.

“The Captain and first mate will see you now.” The crewmate said. “Follow me. Keep any weapons put away. We won’t hesitate to strike first if we suspect anything.”

Their eyes pinned on Tommy and Phil had to fight the urge to spread his wings out protectively, hiding Tommy from the crewmate's judging eyes. While Tommy was a little shit, that wasn't something Phil exactly wanted other people, with weapons, pointing out.

Unfortunately, he didn't care to reveal his wings or full identity just yet, so he settled for stepping in front of Tommy, who made a quiet noise of protest. Phil stomped on his foot, not caring at the strange look the crewmate gave them.

They were lead under the deck of the ship, and Phil wasn't a huge fan of being trapped inside a boat- it was too difficult to escape if it sunk- and from the slight hitch in Tommy's breath, he wasn't fan of the narrow halls either.

Fuck, the last thing he needed was Tommy panicking. He risked a glance over his shoulder. Tommy's fists were clenched tightly, and the muscles in his jaw were jumping, but otherwise, he looked ok. There wasn't much Phil could do, so he just offered Tommy what he hoped was a reassuring smile as they descended ever further into the belly of the ship.

Somehow the thing was even fucking bigger on the inside, or at least it seemed that way, with the endless fucking hallways they walked through.

They passed no one else on the ship. He wondered if the way had been cleared for them.

He wondered if they were even going to see the captain. He didn't pull his sword out, but it was already in the first spot in his inventory.

He hoped that Tommy had done the same.

Eventually, after what was, realistically only a couple of minutes, but long, awkward ones, they stopped at a door. It was fancy, carved from dark oak and detailed in gold, and it appeared heavy. "They're waiting for you. I'll be outside the door the entire time, so don't even consider trying anything. Not that either of you could take them."

Phil let the barb slide off. People tended to underestimate him without his wings, and he raised his hand slightly hoping to cut off whatever Tommy was about to say. Antagonizing people had its place and this wasn't it. Even if the man was dead wrong. Even a child was dangerous if they had training from Technoblade and Philza.

But he did not say that, since he wasn't an idiot, and simply smiled instead "Of course. Thank you."

With that, the crewmate swung the door open.

Behind the slightly too ornate desk sat a large, intimidating man. He looked nearly sixty and had a long grey beard. He wore a uniform that could only mean he was someone important with the number of bells and whistles on it, and the hat perched atop his head indicated that he was, indeed, a pirate. To his right stood a short woman, wearing a bright red coat. The first mate, he assumed, had a sword strapped to her side. The Captain did not appear to have a weapon on his, but who knows what was stored in his inventory.

Before Phil had entered the room fully or even had time to open his mouth, Tommy was peering over his shoulder, pressing against Phil's back. He let out a sharp gasp and pushed past Phil entirely. Phil had no time to process, let alone stop Tommy as he stumbled into the center of the room. And, with a mix of something that sounded like disbelief and joy, he practically shouted "Captain Puffy!"

Chapter End Notes

- 1) Heyyyyyyy people. Sorry for the wait, I fought this chapter all week. I was determined to introduce Puffy in this chapter come hell or high water, which is why its like 8k words.
- 2) Idk how I feel about this chapter but, uh, here? I'm sick of looking at it so it's your turn.
- 3) Puffy! Only one or two people guessed right so congrats to those who did!
On a separate note, ya'll interested in me dropping the playlists for this fic? every chapter title is taken from a song!
- 4) I am very tired so pls take this and be kind. Hydrate, take a nap, don't bully ppl on twitter. I am going to sleep now. I love you all. Come yell at me on Tumblr.

i don't think i have a clue

Chapter Summary

Capatin Puffy content come and get it

Chapter Notes

Enjoy! No CW as far as I can tell, bar what's generally tagged for the fic.

(Just to add something- This fic was started on 1/28, so anything that has happened in lore since then is probably not going to be in this fic, though it depends on if I can work it in. For example, in this world, Puffy did not have amnesia. I have too much planned and her lore just... doesn't work with it? Anyway, just for my newer readers, lots of the divergence comes from how long ago I started this fic (four months holy shit!!))

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

For a moment, there was nothing but stunned silence as Tommy's brain caught up to what he'd done.

Oh shit. He'd fucked up. He clapped a hand over his mouth instinctually, but it was far, far too late for that. The brief moment of joy he'd felt at seeing Puffy, one of the few people he'd somewhat trusted in the future, replaced by something akin to panic and just a quiet 'oh shit' on repeat in the back of his mind.

Damn it he was an idiot, wasn't he?

For their part, Puffy and the man behind the desk both look floored. The man. Behind the Captain's desk. Not Puffy.

Oh fuck it was worse than he thought.

Puffy wasn't even the captain.

Phil recovered first, though Tommy wasn't exactly surprised. The man was a fucking good fighter and even if he wasn't always the best at it, or even good at it, Phil still had a bunch of kids, including fucking Technoblade, and you probably got some instincts from that, right?

"I'm so sorry about him-" Phil started, stepping up beside Tommy, and for once Tommy let him stand between him and the people who, realistically, were likely to stab him. His brain was still reeling, from seeing Puffy and from the big fucking mistake he'd made. Fuck he'd

be pissed at Phil if he wasn't already so angry at himself. Could he not keep his mouth shut for one damn minute?

"Quiet." The man who was probably actually captain exchanged a brief look with Puffy, and stood, probably to let her know to fucking run them through since Tommy had apparently just disrespected the captain by calling the *first mate* captain. Fuck, Phil should've left him on shore, because apparently he really couldn't keep his mouth shut. Phil's mouth snapped shut and Tommy's hand was still over his own mouth. Embarrassing as fuck. Who was he, an asshole watching a minecart wreck?

He slowly let it fall away as the man, probably Captain Oliver, stood up. "Now, I'm only going to ask this once. Who the hell are you two? And how do you know my first mate? And are calling her captain?" His voice wasn't exactly loud but there was a certain steel to it that had Tommy's sense jumping into fucking overdrive. He'd heard that tone a few too many times before someone put a fucking sword to his throat or bombed his home, thanks.

Phil shot Tommy a look briefly, and Tommy hoped that the vague panic he was feeling wasn't nearly as evident on his face as it felt. He swallowed hard as the silence stretched a beat too long and he resisted the urge to draw his own sword. The quarters were too close, and the other two had the home-court advantage. He'd fight them if he had to the ship's deck, but he'd much rather do it on the ship's deck rather than in the ridiculously fucking small maze of halls behind them, or the cramped office they were standing in.

Fuck he didn't really want to think about how small the rooms really were, as the walls seemed to squeeze in tighter around them.

"Don't even think about lying." The man warned as he watched them exchange looks, and Tommy's hand immediately went for his sword. Shit, he was dead? They were dead and it would be his fault. Maybe he could blunder his way out of this- at least annoy them into submission long enough to make a break for it. He opened his mouth, unsure of what the fuck he was going to say, just hoping to Ender it bought them time.

Then, Puffy, who looked almost the same as she always had, held up a hand. She hadn't taken her eyes off of Tommy yet and despite the fact that she wasn't exactly glaring, the intense gaze made him want to squirm. That look reminded him nothing of the warm and gentle look he was used to seeing on her face. "It's fine." She said quietly. "Let it go. I'll take care of this"

Captain Jones, shared a look with Puffy that was brief and unreadable but after a moment he relented and took a step back. Tommy wasn't surprised. Puffy did have that effect on people. He'd seen men far more terrifying than that yield to Puffy when she was wearing bunny slippers. The man who Tommy was pretty sure was captain seemed to deflate slightly as he made his way out from behind the desk.

His expression was a mix of confusion and disappointment as he asked. "Do you want me to leave?"

Puffy seemed to consider things for a moment, eyes flicking between where he and Phil stood in front of the door, and the burly captain. "I'll talk to them myself. You can clear out. Go get

changed.”

Tommy’s brain obviously was muddled by being in such a small cabin, with probably shit air quality, and maybe even drugs in the air. (Was that a thing on Pirate ships? It might be.)because he had no fucking clue what was happening. If that man was Captain Jones, (who Phil had only mentioned like 76 times) why the fuck was he taking orders from Puffy who was apparently his first mate?

“Are you sure?” The man asked, giving them a suspicious look. Tommy resisted the urge to flip him off/

Puffy cracked a familiar grin that was just the slightest bit crooked. “It’s a kid and a guy in a bathrobe. I think I’ve held off worse.”

That probably wasn’t true, if Puffy knew who they actually were. If she could see Phil’s wings tucked tightly against his back, and knew that he was generally considered a scary-ass motherfucker and that Tommy had been trained by Technoblade himself for months now, and had fought multiple wars.

Of course, she didn’t know either of those things and Tommy, unfortunately, still looked fourteen, and Phil could look soft, despite how intimidating he could be. It was strange, how non-threatening Phil made himself look... like literally any random middle-aged man, if they thought that robes were high fashion.

Tommy and Phil shuffled further into the room, as the man, who may not be the captain, headed for the door, giving them a look of deep distrust. Tommy felt the same way and gave the man a glare. Phil still stood slightly in front of him. If his wings were out, Tommy was certain that they’d have been spread wide, like he was trying to be protective or some shit.

As The heavy door swung open, and the man disappeared into the hall, Tommy was surprised that the crewmate outside hadn't come in, but perhaps they hadn't shouted loud enough to alert them, or maybe their orders were different. Tommy had no fucking clue. The door closed with a thunk and that left them in the room with Puffy, who was still studying them with serious eyes.

There was still something about her though, that despite the fact that she had no fucking clue who he was, that put him at ease. “I’m so sorry, I hope we didn’t offend the Captain, as we really need to speak with-” Phil tried again, and Tommy was surprised to find that he could detect the slightest hints of uncertainty in Phil’s voice. Normally Phil at least pretended he knew what he was doing all the time, and rarely fucking admitted he didn’t know. At least, Tommy had rarely heard it.

Fuck that was twice in about three days. It had to be a record.

“No, no.” Puffy cut him off as she took a step closer. Phil took a small step to the right, to stand almost entirely in front of Tommy now. Something danced through her eyes that he couldn’t quite place. “Before you say anything further, I have a question for the kid.”

Tommy knew from the way Phil's shoulders tense that he was about to say something stupid. Like probably that she shouldn't talk to Tommy. Fuck. That was bullshit. "I'm not a kid, but what's your question?" he asked "Ask away, I'm like, an open book or some shit."

That was a bald-faced lie, but who gave a shit? He would come up with something to lie about, no matter the question.

Puffy and Tommy both ignored Phil's quiet hiss of "Tommy!"

"I just want to know how the hell you knew that I was the captain."

Phil was going to have a heart attack.

He was a healthy man, with no underlying health conditions, didn't abuse drugs, or alcohol, or potions, and hadn't touched a grapple in years. However, somehow, the child that heard voices and routinely got into wars was not the child that was not the most worrisome child anymore. No, it was the one who was a time-traveler and apparently had no fucking filter.

Phil knew that Tommy didn't have a filter. Especially when tensions ran high. Oh he'd certainly gotten the full brunt of that over the last few months, but Tommy had also matured as a result of time travel, and was at least somewhat, slightly, decent at keeping his mouth shut.

He was sure that it'd be fine. What had been the chances of Tommy actually seeing someone he knows from the future on a random ship, that was the last step they needed to get the translation book they'd been after for months?

Apparently pretty fucking high.

Tommy seemed to freeze for a split second and Phil's heart dropped. Shit. Tommy wasn't a good liar, not at all, and if Tommy told the truth he took back every word he'd said about protecting him. He'd strangle Tommy with his bare hands.

Obviously, that was a lie and Phil would slaughter every person on the ship if necessary to get Tommy out safely. But Tommy would be so grounded if he told this woman, Puffy, about time travel right now.

"I met you before," Tommy said confidently and Phil closed his eyes briefly, resigning himself to a fight. He really, really didn't want to "Years ago, you uh helped me out once. Never forget the captain with pog horns and hair."

Phil opened his eyes and turned to Tommy, as they widened a fraction. Tommy gave him a wild grin and his eyes were only slightly panicked. That lie wasn't horrible. Did it sound entirely like the truth? No absolutely fucking not, but for Tommy, the lie was good. Good enough that maybe, just maybe, a stranger would believe it.

Puffy, Captain Puffy apparently, seemed to consider this for a moment.

“Well kid, to be honest, I don’t remember that.” She said, and Phil’s heart turned to ice in his chest “But I meet a lot of people, so you’ll have to forgive my lack of recognition here. The two of you care to introduce yourselves since I think I’m at a disadvantage?”

“I’m TommyInnit,” Tommy said proudly, taking a step out from behind Phil, and Phil had to restrain himself from taking a step in front of Tommy again. That would probably just piss him off and the last thing they needed was another fight between the two of them while trying to negotiate for this book. “I’m a bit offended that you don’t remember me, Captain. I’m only the best and greatest, and biggest man *ever* .”

No, no, Phil *was* going to kill him. He took it all back. “Tommy,” he said quietly. “Mate, please don’t-”

He was cut off by Puffy’s peal of laughter, as something akin to amusement sparked in her eye as she looked between them. “No, no it’s fine. It’s my fault for not remembering him.”

“Damn fucking right,” Tommy grumbled, even though Phil knew that it was literally impossible for Puffy to remember Tommy since that was a lie. He was getting a headache,

“I’m Phil,” he said, finally cutting in because being subtle wasn’t going to work with Tommy in the room. Tommy was about as subtle as a hoglin. “Tommy is my son if you couldn’t guess.”

Tommy whipped around and pinned Phil with a glare that caused him to wince. Yikes. He hadn’t even quite considered that Tommy wouldn’t want him to be introduced like that. But it was too late, he supposed, as Puffy offered a kind, but still somewhat empty smile. “Well, I certainly see the resemblance.”

“He’s not my father.” Tommy spat and the anger in his voice would’ve sent Phil reeling if he wasn’t already prepared for it. Something about the quality of Tommy’s voice was different, softer perhaps, or maybe he just remembered he was supposed to play the part, as he added; “I’m adopted.”

Puffy’s eyes had widened slightly as Tommy glared daggers into the ground, arms crossed tightly. She gave Phil a look and he smiled apologetically because there wasn’t really anything he could say to that. From Tommy, he hadn’t been a father. Apparently not a very good one, but this woman knew none of that and needed to know none of that. “Oh.” is all she said, before clasping her hands together tightly and forcing a smile that was far brighter than he imagined she felt like giving them. “Now, I see how you figured me out as Captain- you’re the first ones to do so, actually, so I suppose you want an explanation? I think you might deserve it since you are the first.”

Tommy didn’t seem too intent on saying much, so Phil spoke up. “I would like to know, did something happen to Captain Oliver? I was told to speak to him, captain of the Fool’s Luck.”

“That’s sexist *Phil* ,” Tommy snapped, and Phil was almost certain he was joking, “What can pirates not be women?”

“That’s not what I was saying, fucking gremlin.” Phil shot back “I was saying my sources reported a man named captain Jones. My sources are very rarely wrong.”

“It’s a bit of a story,” Puffy admitted as she studied him. “Why don’t the two of you take a seat first.”

There were two chairs opposite the desk that Puffy now stood behind, and Phil took one while Tommy sprawled across the other, eyes glinting as if daring either of them to say anything about how his legs were swung across the arms. Phil didn’t say anything and Puffy only gave Tommy a quick look Phil couldn’t quite read, before turning her attention back to Phil.

“Captain Oliver... doesn’t exist,” Puffy admitted with a slight grin. “He makes an excellent cover for what we’re doing, and some of my crew members love to act, especially my second mate”

Phil can’t help but let out a small laugh. “He must be a hell of an actor if he could fool my sources.”

“Oh, he is. I’m always afraid we’ll dock one day and he won’t come back because he’s joining a traveling theatre troupe.” Puffy said as she took a seat across from Phil and though he had no reason to trust her, he found himself doing just that. Perhaps it was the way her office was set up, now that he had a chance to study it- warm, with rugs and pillows, and a discarded cup of coffee on the desk, hidden behind all the practical things one would expect from a captain-or maybe just the way her eyes held his. Certainly, they were wary, but they had life to them. Phil could appreciate that. “But we didn’t really count on someone realizing who I was. I haven’t claimed to be captain in years.”

“Why let someone else take your credit?” Tommy asked, sitting forward in his chair. He sounded indignant. “That’s shit, not being able to claim how fucking cool you are.”

“I do have to ask, why the charade?” Phil pressed before Puffy could evade. . “It seems like a lot of effort, mate.”

Puffy laughed slightly. “Well, there are a couple of reasons. Mostly because of people like your... sources, Phil. A reputation like ours gets us lots of enemies, and when different people take turns playing the captain, it makes it harder for them to have a target. One guy talks to the captain and it’s a bee hybrid with a snapped wing, but someone else talks to a fish hybrid with purple hair, and another talks to a human man with a long beard. It makes us that much scarier, and harder to take down.”

That actually... made a lot of sense. Phil could respect the tactical strategy of that, especially since it had worked fucking brilliantly.

“Only a handful of people know that I’m the captain.” Puffy said “Hell, even half the crew isn’t sure that between me, my first mate, and second mate, who is actually Captain. They’re usually just the seasonals though. The real crew knows.”

“That’s fucked up,” Tommy said. “You should take credit for all the shit you steal. If I was a pirate I’d want to claim all my shit, let the world know all the Big Man TommyInnit can do”

“That’s a good way to get arrested.” Puffy said with a laugh “And the prison system on this server isn’t really one I want to test out just yet. Or ever.”

Tommy barked a laugh. “Fair enough I guess. I’ve never been to prison, but I’ve heard it’s shit.” There was something to Tommy’s words, almost like a joke he didn’t quite understand and Phil filed that away in his things to think about a later folder, which was growing at an alarming rate.

“I’ve been on a different server. Not my cup of tea.” Phil added with a slight grin. Of course, he’d broken out in less than an hour, but they didn’t need to know that. Tommy gave him an odd look, though not entirely surprised.

“What the fuck did you do?” Tommy asked,, “What the fuck Phil I’ve never heard this story.”

“Well I’m not exactly proud of it.” getting arrested had actually been rather embarrassing, honestly. He should’ve been able to fend on a few lousy men with swords, but in his defense, he was very, very drunk that night and had only turned 22. “And it was nothing too bad, just a little drunk and disorderly in my youth.”

Well, if drunk and disorderly meant a job gone wrong, and two extra assholes dead, then that covered it, but he really didn’t want to out himself as the Angel of Death just yet to the stranger.

Tommy looked like he didn’t quite believe him but Puffy just laughed. “Well as fun as that is, I know the two of you are here on business and we’ve already wasted quite a bit of time. What are you here for?”

“A book,” Phil said, turning his attention back to the sheep hybrid. “We’re looking for a book.”

“That’s a bit vague,” Puffy said, her eyebrows raised, as she leaned forward. A strand of wild curly white hair fell in front of her face escaping from the hat nestled between her curling horns. “And certainly doesn’t explain why you had to seek me out for that.”

Phil nodded. “Yeah, I suppose. It… it’s a translation book. Enchanting Table is the language.”

Puffy’s eyes widened and she sat back. “What the hell makes you think that we have something like that?”

Phil refused to even acknowledge the possibility that they wouldn’t have the book. If the book wasn’t here if he had done all that for nothing- he wouldn’t consider it. “My sources may have been fooled by your actor, but they are reliable.”

Puffy's eyes narrowed slightly as she frowned. "Well, unfortunately, we don't have any book like that."

"Are you certain," Phil pressed, leaning forward in his seat. "Because I was told to speak to Captain Oliver Jones to bargain for the book." he glanced at Tommy who was palling rapidly. "I am more than willing to pay for the book. This isn't a matter of asking, Captain. I've heard you have the book."

"I'm very sorry that the two of you came all this way, but... we don't have it." Puffy said, seemingly unphased. "Even if we had such a thing, we'd have long sold it- keeping something that valuable on a ship like this is just painting a target on our backs, and I'd much rather take the payday."

She sounded apologetic, truly, like she was sorry but only in a distant way. She wasn't sorry enough, not for how Phil's entire chest constricted. Nothing. It had all been for nothing. The months of dragging them from server to server, breaking the promises he'd made to himself, all of it for nothing. But, what he felt didn't matter. Tommy was more important. Tommy who had gone deathly pale, who Phil could see trembling, and Phil was unsure if it was rage or something else.

"Toms, take a breath mate. It's okay." Phil said gently ignoring the way he too wanted to shake and rage and the universe that was entirely unfair. Tommy didn't really react, so Phil gently reached out to put a hand on his shoulder, "Tommy, it's -"

"I'm fine." Tommy bit out, yanking his shoulder out from under Phil's hand as if it burned him. "She doesn't have it, we can fucking go. Ender, I don't know why I thought anything else would happen. I'm leaving, I can't stand this room anymore."

BEfore ePhil could say anything else, Tommy bolted out of the room practically running away. He started to get up, to follow Tommy before he did something stupid, but Puffy spoke first.

"Wait,"

Phil didn't have time for her. If she didn't have his book, fine. He wasn't entirely sure he believed her- in fact, he was almost certain he didn't, but he couldn't exactly force it out of her while Tommy was on the loose. "I need to go after him before he does something reckless." Phil said, "I am sorry for wasting your time, but-"

"He'll be fine. The crew won't let him off without you and won't let him do anything rash." Puffy said. "Please, sit back down, Phil."

Phil hesitated before taking seat. "Listen, Captain, I understand that you're very busy and that we've been a bit unconventional, but as far as I can tell, we have no further business with you."

Phil allowed himself to be cold. Whatever Tommy had felt about this woman- the joy he'd seen briefly flash across his face was nothing now that she had given them nothing. Phil wasn't sure if she was lying or not but he didn't quite care, as his anger boiled in his chest.

“Why are you really here?” Puffy asked, ignoring what he said. “I want to know why the Angel of Death is on my ship, toting around an angry and scared child.”

Phil blinked in shock for a moment, because holy fuck, how did this woman even know? “I don’t know what you could be talking about, captain-”

“I’m not an idiot, as much as many people think I am. I would not have survived as a pirate captain by being dumb. So,” Puffy leaned forward and despite being a sheep hybrid it was like looking into the eyes of a wolf “Why are you here, *really*?”

“I didn’t lie to you,” Phil said, trying to keep his voice even. “I am here for the translation book. Tommy needs it. I can’t tell you why, but he has.. Tommy needs help and that translation book is our only shot and I have spent months looking for it. I will not stop until I have it.”

Puffy studied him for long enough that the hair on the back of Phil’s neck stood up and his wings ached to be released, twitching with nervous energy. He did not want to fight this woman, not here, not when she might at least provide a lead, but if he had to, if he had to force the answer from her with his blade he would do it.

. “You really care about the kid, huh?” She asked, almost challenging him, with a spark in her eyes that dared him to give the wrong answer.

“He’s my son,” Phil said instinctively, as he bristled slightly. He’d already let that slip, so there was no point in denying it. “Of course I do!”

“Why did Tommy say he wasn’t your son, then?” Puffy pressed and Phil’s jaw clenched. What was she insinuating?

“That’s not your business.” Phil snapped, unable to help the rage rising in his chest. He was frayed from the honestly shitty weeks prior, to the emotional turmoil of the last few days, and the whiplash he’d gotten in the last fifteen minutes alone. Not to mention the despair that simmered, ready to overtake him if he gave it more than a passing glance. The rage was far better. “But I don’t care who he thinks of me as, or if he calls me Phil, I don’t care. Tommy needs my help, and I will do anything and everything in my power to get him what he needs. You know who I am, Captain Puffy, so you must know what exactly my power entails.”

Puffy relaxed visibly, and her face broke into a smile. “Alright then.”

Phil’s brows furrowed in confusion. “What? What the fuck?”

“Sorry for the interrogation.” Puffy said “I didn’t mean to insult you, but the kid didn’t look exactly happy to be with you, and I knew, from the moment you walked in, who you were. Tommy... well I don’t know him, but he’s what, thirteen? Fourteen? I don’t tolerate the mistreatment of children from anyone.”

Phil was equally offended and impressed. Offended, because it was Tommy. His son, fucking hell, and he would never do that (except, a voice whispered, he had. You’d done that to him in another timeline) and is stung that she would even insinuate that he was what, holding

Tommy against his will? On the other hand, this woman, who came up to maybe Phil's shoulder, had looked him in the eye and interrogated him, without hesitation, risking a fight with a man she knew to be deadly, for a kid she didn't know.

..., he was starting to see why Tommy had been excited to see her.

"And." She continued, "I wanted to see what you were really after. Most people who come to us for that book, they're after money, fame, fortune, or power. Hell, even a few have come claiming religious reasons. They're all bullshit in my opinion. But you... well, you want to help your kid and I believe you."

"I thought you said you didn't have the book," Phil said, unable to keep the accusation from his tone.

"I don't technically," Puffy said, unbothered by his tone. She grinned and something like mischief sparkled in her eyes. "But I may have a copy that we can settle a price for."

"So what's the plan, Technoblade," Tubbo asked as he trailed a half step behind the taller man. "We better not sit here for a week, that's *boring* as fuck."

They had left the modded server, and honestly, it was for the best, with the way that the admins had started looking at Techno. Murder would be a bad rap for their business, so they were at a stalemate, but Techno was almost certain that if they had hung out much longer, someone would've ended up without a head, or banned from the server. Or both.

To give them some peace, they'd gone to the nearest open server. Honestly, those were getting further and further apart, the closer they got to the hub of the world, where huge servers such as Hypixel were. Most admins didn't want strangers just popping into their servers to sleep and Techno could respect it.

Unfortunately, it meant things were more expensive since they are now staying in a village with an inn that was way too overpriced. It was nicer than some of the other ones that Techno had stayed in, certainly, but for the amount he'd paid, he'd just as rather have walked a few hundred blocks and set up camp. But, Tubbo was tired of camping, and his head was still bothering him. He wasn't complaining nearly as much, but Techno caught the way he winced sometimes, when Tommy was loud or when the light was bright, or when Phil had ruffled his hair affectionately.

It was... concerning.

Technosoft?

E

E

E

Pog!

He wasn't concerned, but he didn't want Tubboto to die. If he did, well.... Technoblade wasn't entirely sure he'd beat Tommy in that fight. Besides, Tubbo wasn't a bad kid, if a bit strange.

But, it didn't stop him from being annoying. Technoblade was certain he hadn't been that annoying when he was fifteen.

"We don't know if it's going to be a week." Technoblade reminded Tubbo, glancing over his shoulder at the much shorter kid. He was fifteen, but just barely scraping up to 5'5. Poor kid's genes were either shit, or he'd be a late bloomer. Wilbur had always been shorter than him as kids- not terribly so, but enough to rub it in. Then they turned fourteen and Wilbur grew what seemed to be three inches overnight and didn't stop. "They could be longer."

"Or shorter?" Tubbo asked a bit hopefully. Techno grimaced.

He missed Phil about as much as Tubbo missed Tommy, probably. Except he hadn't seen Phil in weeks, though that wasn't entirely usual for them. They'd gone months before, but at least then they'd had letters. "Probably not."

"Oh," Tubbo said shoulder slumping. Technoblade could understand the feeling. Waiting around could be boring and difficult, especially when you had something on your mind.

And Technoblade certainly had something on his mind. Phil had flat out refused to tell Techno what had happened on the server no matter how Technoblade pressed. In return, Technoblade had not told him what he had learned from the man he'd killed. Though, it was because he was petty, no, Techno was far above that, he thought (no matter what Chat said). Heza wasn't a name he knew, but he'd spent the morning asking around in the market, while Tubbo went wild with the emeralds Techno had given him, and he'd almost instantly turned up with enough information to start a plan.

Heza was apparently renowned for having an extensive collection of knowledge and rare artifacts. She was rumored to have worked with numerous mercenaries, hiring them to acquire goods or secure deals that would protect her own wealth.

It never came up, since people seem to be afraid to even whisper her name, but Technoblade wasn't stupid. Between the way Phil was acting, and the rapidly spreading stories about the emergence of the Angel of Death, Technoblade had a guess as to what had happened.

He wouldn't stand for it and not for the first time, were Chat's calls for blood more welcome than a hindrance.

Blood for the Blood God

Blood for the Blood God

Blood for the Blood God

Avenge Dadza!

Blood for the Blood God

Blood for the Blood God

Blood Blood Blood

E

Blood for the Blood God

Blood for the Blood God

“But, that gives us some time to do things,” Technoblade continued, pulling himself away from the bloodlust Chat was attempting to stir. “And I am tired of sitting around too, Tubbo. Now, I have a question for you. How do you feel about a little bit of minor arson?”

“ *Pog* ”

Chapter End Notes

- 1) This was supposed to go out last night, but I fucked my hands up a little bit and couldn't type lol. Nothing that a day and some Tylenol couldn't take care of! Sorry, it's taking me so long, but I'm working pretty much all the time and I'm tired. Very minimal editing has happened to this chapter, as always.
- 2) Puffy my beloved. I am enjoying writing her so far and I hope you all enjoy her too! You guys freaked last chapter and it was so fun to watch lol.
- 3) Hint for next chapter: You've been waiting for it for a long time and I'm finally going to deliver.
- 4) uh, so people make discords for fics now? I have never been in one but would you all want that? maybe? I'm making 0 promises but yeah lmk
- 5) If you haven't already, go check out the newest work in this series! It is a short one-shot with eternal duo content that I'm very proud of! It isn't vital to this story, but it would definitely add something!
- 6) Love you guys so much. We are at 80k+ hits, 3500 kudos and 1000 comments. That is absolutely insane, as someone whose next most popular fic (on an old account) had like,,, 2k hits? maybe? this is bonkers and I love you all. Come yell at me on tumblr, hydrate, and take care of yourselves! I love you all!

i could use some friends for a change

Chapter Summary

wilbur's interlude, part 1

Chapter Notes

I've been promising Wilbur content for over 10 chapters and I finally wrote it.

please note that this chapter does contain JSchlatt's character. If you are not comfortable reading the portions with him in it, just skip them. his inclusion does not have anything to do with my personal opinion of the CC, and I do not want to see anything about it in my comments. I will delete comments referring to the CC, positive or negative.

That being said, this chapter is mainly about Wilbur. enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

The message didn't go through when Wilbur first tried to send it, which was really kind of disappointing, considering how monumental it felt, hitting the send button. Of course, he then realized it was probably because he was in between servers and the closest server had shit reception at best. Wilbur was a fucking genius.

So, about two days later, when he finally arrived at a server far enough away from his home that people probably wouldn't recognize him, or remember him later, he tried again.

This time, the message went through with ease, a quiet ping being the only indication that it had been sent.

Of course, that meant Wilbur started at his stupid communicator for approximately three hours and had just about decided that he'd done the most embarrassing thing ever (because really, why would they let him come with them? It had been a pity offer, and the group might not even be together, and honestly they probably didn't even like him and-)

It dinged. "Where r u?"

Wilbur chewed at his lip for a moment, before typing out the server that he was on, as well as the specific coords.

"Cool, we're close. be there tomorrow"

Wilbur didn't sleep a wink, and it wasn't just because he was sleeping under a tree.

As Wilbur surveyed the crowded marketplace in the town that they agreed to meet in, his stomach twisted. It was almost ten minutes past when they said they'd be there and there was no sign of them- not bright hair or curled horns, just Wilbur, standing a half head above most of the people.

They stood him up. They weren't coming, they had just done it to fuck with him. They were fucking with him and had never had any intention to come. Ender, they were probably off laughing their asses off about the stupid guy who really thought that they would want him to come with them? He was so stupid for thinking that-

"There he is!" Wilbur turned sharply to find Schlatt grinning wildly at him, with arms crossed "Wilbur you tall, freaky, fuck."

"Schlatt you bastard," Wilbur called, the tension releasing at the sight of the other's curled horns. He was hesitant to just jump right back into insulting the other man, but the hybrid's eyes lit up and he cackled, so Wilbur assumed that he'd said the right thing.

"Glad you finally came to your senses," Schlatt said as Wilbur made his way over to him "I figured you'd come calling for us one day."

"Please don't make me admit that you're right." Wilbur said, only halfway joking "If that's what this is, then I'll just die instead."

Schlatt cackled again "No need to die, nah, if I got you killed Sally would probably kick my ass."

"Speaking of, where are the others? Run them off Schlatt?" Wilbur joked.

"Not hardly." Schlatt said "I couldn't get rid of those annoying freeloading bastards if I tried- and believe me, I have. Nah, they're just waiting for us by the port. No need to spend any time on this boring-ass server. Too many people have already explored it, and there isn't anyone worth exploiting."

Wilbur hummed lightly as he followed Schlatt through the twisting mazes of buildings back to where everyone first entered the server.

It didn't take long, since for all Schlatt gave him hell about being tall, the hybrid was only a little shorter than he was, and they had long legs, to make it to where the others were waiting. Sally and Charlie looked practically the same, and Niki's hair was now a simple blonde, with blue streaks running through it.

"Wilbur!" Sally called, catching sight of him first, as she jumped to her feet. "It's so good to see you!"

Wilbur was surprised, but not entirely unhappy when he found himself being pulled into a firm hug. "You too", he said, instinctively wrapping his arms around her, though it was a

little awkward since at most, the top of her head reached his shoulder.

“Don’t hog him all to yourself!” Charlie complained, from behind them, and immediately pulled Wilbur into a brief bro hug. It was awkward, but Wilbur didn’t really mind as the shorter hybrid beamed at him.

“We’re glad you came.” Niki offered with a genuine smile, though she made no move to hug him.

“Why don’t *I* get such a warm welcome?” Schlatt whined, crossing his arms.

Sally rolled her eyes “You were gone for maybe ten minutes Schlatt.”

“Also, Wilbur is superior to you in every way possible.” Charlie chimed in, shrugging “It’s just true. You need to accept that now.”

“He’s right.” Niki agreed with a small grin. “Sorry, Schlatt. We have a new favorite now.”

“Fuck you. I hate all of you and hope you burn in hell.” Schlatt retorted, crossing his arms. He turned on Wilbur. “And you- we’re leaving you here. You’ve been with us for five minutes and you’re already causing problems.”

Wilbur just laughed “Good luck getting rid of me now Schlatt. I’m like a fungus. I start growing on the bottoms of your feet and in your shoes and you can’t get rid of me, no matter how hard you try.”

“What the fuck dude,” Schlatt said with a laugh. “Well, come on fungi dude. We have places to be.”

He needed a walk.

Wilbur slipped away from the campsite that was halfway set up, a notebook clutched in his arms darting into the woods, still lit by the golden evening light, the sounds of his... companions chattering behind him floating on the cool breeze.

Wilbur had only been with the small group for around a week and a half and while things were good, they were still... tense.

No, no tense was the wrong word.

It was just...okay, the four of them obviously knew each other pretty well and had been traveling together for quite some time. At camp at night, there was a certain groove, a routine, a dance, if you will.

Wilbur being there put everything out of step. He was always a beat behind, or a half step ahead, trying to gather wood for the fire when Niki had already done so, or offering to make dinner, but it was someone else’s turn. Or there was an inside joke that left the other in stitches, while Wilbur laughed awkwardly.

It was the way that Schlatt and Sally could push each other's buttons, but never sent each other over the edge, or how Niki knew exactly what drink to grab everyone else when they stopped in a real town. It was the way Charlie called all the others by insane nicknames that made no sense to anyone but them.

It was the way that they only had two tents, or set up four bales of hay around the fire without thinking, leaving Wilbur sitting just outside the circle.

It was a bit painful.

It wasn't their fault, though.

Really! Everyone was nice- well Schlatt wasn't exactly nice, but he was nice in his own way- but it was so, so painfully obvious that Wilbur was still the outsider, despite how much they seemed to like him.

Should he have left?

At home, he at least knew where he stood, even if he was a bit of an outsider there too. Even if Tommy was pushing him away, turning to Technoblade who'd given up on the family a long time ago, and to Phil who'd never cared enough, until Tommy was more like him.

At home, on the older server, Wilbur at least knew he was supposed to stand on the outside and didn't have to try to-

"Wilbur!" Wilbur's head snapped up, and there was Niki, hair flying in all directions. She smiled at him, "There you are! I've been looking for you! We've kicked Charlie off dinner rotation because he burned the stew again. Please tell me you can cook better than that?"

Wilbur found himself smiling, despite himself and the anxiety curling in his gut "I'm certainly not as good as you, but I can make stew, without burning it. And I've been told that I make a mean toast- as long as I didn't make the bread."

Niki laughed and held out a hand as if to help him up. "Lucky for you, I have bread made. Now let's go. Sally and Schlatt start fighting when they get hungry."

Wilbur hesitated for only a moment, before letting Niki pull him to his feet. Though she was considerably shorter, she was strong and he stumbled forward from the force of her tug, laughing.

"Yeah let's go. I suppose I can't let you people starve." Wilbur joked.

"What sort of friend would you be then?" Niki challenged, tugging on his arms. "Now come on. I don't want to break up another food fight."

Wilbur hardly heard the rest of what she said, as surprising warmth bloomed in his chest. Friends huh?

He wasn't sure if it was sad that he rode that high through the rest of the night, as he chopped up mushrooms in a familiar manner, making the stew practically on autopilot, as Schlatt and

Sally did begin to fight, while Charlie narrated like it was some sort of sporting event. It was hilarious if a little concerning.

“They do this all the time,” Niki said quietly with a slight grin, as she sat down behind him, where he was stirring the stew. “Like, at least once a week. I think it’s a stress relief thing. I dunno, but better each other than us.”

Wilbur hummed in agreement. “I’d say so. Does it ever get worse than this?”

“Not really,” Niki said, taking a seat beside him. “They usually get over it almost immediately.”

Niki was right, after a few more minutes of screaming about... what Wilbur was pretty sure was just the right way to collect sweet berries, they both stormed off in separate directions. They were back not even five minutes later and Sally offered Schlatt the sweet berries she’d collected and he took them without complaint.

It reminded him of the fights he used to get in with Techno.

Wilbur shook his head slightly pushing away the memory. Those fights were long, *long* gone, and weren’t fucking coming back. Their fights anymore, or what little he’d seen Techno to even speak to him, were different. They were angry. Wilbur knew that Technoblade didn’t care- wouldn’t even fucking admit they were family- so he no longer pulled punches. There wasn’t reconciliation because Technoblade never stuck around long enough for there to be.

This time it had been Wilbur though, which might be fucking ironic if he thought about it long enough. Already he could feel the tension in his shoulders just at the memory of those last bitter words he spat at Technoblade, in the middle of the night. What Technoblade had accused him of. Wilbur wasn’t fucking jealous. He was tired. He was tired of being pushed to the outside.

He couldn’t stew in his thoughts long, as Charlie pulled him into a lively conversation about mobs, and which ones were objectively the best and the

There were still only four haybales surrounding the fire, but before he could go sit on the old log just outside the circle Sally, who had since calmed from her fight, once Wilbur had started handing out bowls of soup, grabbed his arm.

“Here,” she said with a smile, scooting over. “Sit beside me, idiot. It’s too cold back there so far from the fire.”

There wasn’t really enough room on the haybale, but her hand was around his wrist, and she was smiling so brightly Wilbur couldn’t find it in himself to say no. “Alright, if you say so.” Wilbur agreed easily and took a seat.

It was a little hard to eat practically pressed against her side, elbows knocking and knees pressed together, but he found it didn’t much mind.

“Hey, you know..” Charlie said, slurping down the rest of his soup in a way that would certainly be obnoxious if Wilbur wasn’t in a really good mood. “Wilbur, I saw that guitar you brought with you. You wanna show off those sick, sick chords you know?”

“Oh, I don’t know,” Wilbur said, “I’m not-”

“Nah he doesn’t know how to play.” Schlatt said with a snort “I bet he just uses it to get chicks.”

“Oh, so you think I can’t play.” he said, setting his mostly empty bowl of stew down, meeting Schlatt’s challenging gaze from across the fire “Is that what I’m hearing?”

“He doesn’t have to if he doesn’t want to.” Niki butted in kindly, but Wilbur wasn’t about to back down from Schlatt’s challenge.

“Yeah, you heard me right,” Schlatt said, crossing his arms and ignoring Niki entirely. “You seem like the type of guy who would just carry around a guitar for chick points and can only play like two chords.”

“Schlatt you can’t play *any* chords.” Sally retorted “And you might should take points from Wilbur about getting chicks. I mean, your game seems kind of weak...”

“Fuck you sally.” Schlatt said without missing a beat “I bet beanpole here can’t even play that much!”

“Fuck you.” Wilbur said, “I’ll have you know that I’m an amazing player, and have been told so by many, many people.”

Okay, many, many people was probably an exaggeration, but so far everyone he’d played for had said he was very good and his ego was solid enough that he knew he was good.

“Prove it then.” Schlatt challenge.

“I will,” Wilbur said and hopped over the bale digging through the stuff thrown in his tent to find his guitar. It took only a moment and he pulled it out before practically sprinting back. Sally had vacated the bale they were on and was sitting scrunched up against Niki.

“Any requests?” he asked as he settled on the bale, guitar tucked against him in a familiar position.

“A sea shanty,” Sally suggested with a grin. “I know almost all of them!”

Wilbur knew a few of them, not many, but Phil had taught him a few, once, when he was first learning to play guitar, singing the words and Wilbur had easily picked up the melody well enough to play along and sing.

So he chose one of the most familiar, with a deceptively simple tune, and repetitive lyrics, and he played.

It wasn't like playing for Tommy, who either told him that his songs were shit (Even if Wilbur knew that Tommy didn't really mean that) or at best sat and listened in silence. It wasn't like playing for Tubbo, who could hardly sit still through song, trying to sing along, but only managing to mess up the tune most of the time. It wasn't like playing for Technoblade, who hadn't cared for Wilbur's music since they were twelve, or for Phil who never looked quite like he was listening.

And though this wasn't his own song, it was still music from his hands and from his mouth and when the other joined in, Sally first, with a rousing addition to the chorus of the shanty, and the other falling into as they learned the words, even Schlat began singing at the end Wilbur felt warm.

As he played for them, shanties and folk songs and even a song of his own, it was good. The anxiety in his chest, some he hadn't even realized he was carrying, eased. These people... they were his friends. Fucking hell, this was it. He hadn't felt this light in ages.

Fuck, that was what life was supposed to be

Where he was, it wasn't *home* .

It was *better* .

Here he was his own man. His own person. He wasn't bound by being anything or anyone. He wasn't bound by never quite living up to Technoblade and wasn't bound to his younger brother and Tubbo as someone who has a halfway parent, instead of a person.

Wilbur was as free as the music he was playing.

Wilbur wasn't sure how, what force of the universe or of nature, or of magic even that caused it but one very server the star were the same.

Somehow, somehow the cosmic forces that controlled the universe were more powerful than the differences that an admin could make, the distance, and everything else. The stars shone just the same over Wilbur's head on this strange server as they had on the one he'd once called home.

He wasn't sure if that was comforting or not.

Maybe it should be-the idea that some things, no matter the changes, no matter what was happening would always be the same. Wasn't that something that people strove for? A constant? Something to depend on, to cling to, something to find comfort in, that despite how wildly the world turned, that something was still the same?

But, was it suffocating? Why did the same stars shine on him years later, just as they had the night that Wilbur had screamed at Technoblade? The night that he lost his twin? The same as the night that he'd spent hours looking for Tommy, stumbling through the cold snow, panic

choking him, or the same as the first night spent away from home, surrounded by his friends?

Were they something he couldn't escape? Omens that no matter how far Wilbur ran, no matter how much he ignored the ache in his chest every time he saw a stranger that looked just a little too much like Tommy or Tubbo, or how much he resolutely tried not to think of what he'd left, that it would haunt him?

That forever, Wilbur would be shadowed by the ghosts of the pasts he fucking left behind, always at his heels, threatening to surround him swallowed him and pull him back into that dark anger that burned in his chest, sings that he was doomed to forever be left behind, forgotten, or some sort of curse, never quite what he should be, or could be.

Or maybe they were just stars and his brain wouldn't fucking let him go to sleep.

Wilbur wasn't sure.

"Can't sleep?" a quiet voice called, and Wilbur raised up just enough to see Sally standing outside the tent she shared with Niki.

"I'm looking at the stars," Wilbur said in lieu of actually answering her question.

Sally hummed and looked up to the sky herself, studying the stars with a slightly furrowed brow. For a moment silence fell between them, only broken the distant rattle of bones and moans of zombies, held off the bright ring of torches surrounding their campsite.

"Care for some company?" she asked finally, just as the silence stretched toward awkward.

"Sure." Wilbur found himself saying "It's a lovely night."

And that much was true- the biome they were in was warm, even when the sun had long since dipped below the horizon and the fire had burned down to embers between the tents.

Sally didn't hesitate to make her way over and drop into the grass beside him. The plains had wide-open skies and it wasn't hard to see the twinkling stars that spread out across the dark night sky.

"Pretty aren't they?" she said after a moment. "I always like to see the stars at night, especially from out on the ocean. I was raised on the coast, and my dad would sometimes take me on out on his boat so far that you could just barely see the shore, and we'd star up at the stars for hours with my mom. We couldn't do it often, because of the drowned, but ender I loved those nights."

Wilbur hummed quietly. His family had never really done those types of things, not all together, though he could remember being young, Phil taking him and Techno up to the top of a mountain, showing them how to use the stars to navigate. Of course, Wilbur had never really gotten the chance to use that, or need it, and he swallowed down the bitter taste in the back of his throat. "That sounds lovely. Do you have a favorite constellation?"

Sally's eyes lit up and that was the right question to ask. "Yes! It's that one up there. My dad told me it was called 'Heart of Odessa', but I'm not sure if that was something he made up or not. It was always my favorite though."

Wilbur followed to where she was pointing, a smattering of stars, that if he looked close enough, he supposed to could look like a heart.

"What about you?" She asked, and Wilbur turned to face her, the grass tiling his cheek as it fluttered under her warm breath. "Do you have a favorite?"

Had she asked him an hour or so ago, or even ten minutes before, he would've said no. Wilbur liked the stars, but they didn't hold anything for him, but now, sitting under them with Sally, with the freedom and the world at his fingertips he broke out into a grin "Why don't you guess?"

Sally rolled onto her back and starred up. And Wilbur didn't bother to look at the sky, rather the way she narrowed her eyes in concentration. "Hmm, you're a musician, you're funny, you're a bit moody-

"Hey! I am not *moody*. I'm intellectual." Wilbur protested lightly, though there was no real heat to it and Sally just laughed.

"You are! And because of that, I think... Viran, the harpist. Immortalized in the stars, as the legends say, because of how beautiful his singsong." Sally said, pointing to a cluster of stars in the far left of the sky. Wilbur vaguely remembered the story as something Technoblade would have read, or perhaps Phil told him as a very small child, not something he'd ever cared much for himself.

Yet, he found himself smiling "You got it! Viran is my favorite constellation out of them all."

"You're just saying that." Sally said, "No way!"

"No, no it's true!" Wilbur said laughing, as she dug an elbow into his side "That one is my favorite."

"I don't know that I believe you, Soot." Sally teased, rolling onto her side to look at him. "You're just trying to butter me up, for some reason."

"No, really! Wilbur said it's true! I'm hurt you don't believe me!" Wilbur said dramatically, placing a hand over his heart

"Fine." She said, "If you say so."

And it was, now, with the way her eyes lit up in joy and danced with mirth. Earlier he could have cared less, didn't even know that cluster of stars name, but the joy at being proven right, the passion for which she'd told the story, it was his favorite. His eyes traced the stars and memorized them, burning their formation into his brain because now it was his favorite.

As he grinned at her, he realized it wouldn't have mattered what it was called, or what shape the stars were arranged in, Wilbur would've gladly agreed to anything she had said, just to

see that smile on her face.

“I do say so,” Wilbur said resolutely and Sally fell onto her back with a sigh.

Silence fell between them but it wasn't heavy or awkward, it was comfortable, as Wilbur looked at Sally, who stared up at the stars.

“How did you start traveling with the others?” Wilbur asked after a moment “None of you seem like you came from the same place.”

“We didn't.” Sally agreed, rolling back over to look at him. “I met Schlatt first, and we were both traveling alone. That was, er, that was almost a year and a half ago now, and we were both just barely adults, stupid and alone. He tried to scam me and I broke his hand. We both got pinned for something that neither of us did, and ended up hiding from the townspeople for a few days. After that, we just kinda... went the same places. It wasn't long before we met Charlie and honestly, it wasn't even a question. He just kinda showed up. Niki joined us about six months ago, and we asked her to come with us because she literally saved Charlie from a zombie. None of us knew each other but, hey, we've been traveling for a while now, doing whatever we want, going wherever we want. It's great.”

“Do you ever miss home?” Wilbur asked softly.

Sally's smile faded slightly “I mean... yes and no. My dad died and my mom... well I'm a hybrid. A mer hybrid. She lives in the ocean and can't really leave. She was there for me as much as she could be, but... I didn't want to stay there forever. “It didn't really feel like home anymore after dad died and I felt like I was suffocating there.” She looked eyes with him “Do you know what I mean?”

Wilbur let out a soft sigh “Yes, I know the feeling exactly.”

“I thought you might.” Sally offered a smile that was perhaps a tinge sad and Wilbur wanted nothing more than to make it vanish, so he pushed his own feelings aside, and grinned.

“Well, I don't know about you, Sally, but out here, I can breathe.” As if to demonstrate, he took a deep breath in, perhaps a bit dramatically, and let it out in a loud huff. It wasn't entirely a joke, but it succeeded in breaking the tension. She rolled her eyes but laughed and Wilbur allowed an easy smile. “No suffocation, unless you come for Schlatt in his sleep.”

“Hmm, it's definitely a possibility.” Sally agreed, even though mirth danced in her eyes. “Would you help me hide the body?”

Wilbur pretended to think, rubbing his chin. “Well...”

“Bastard!” Sally exclaimed, perhaps a bit loudly and she winced, stifling a laugh “You bastard, you're supposed to be on my side!”

“Okay!” Wilbur cried “Okay! I'll help you dispose of him. Though I suppose you'll be stuck with me then, since we'll have to go on the run together, hiding in abandoned servers, trying not to get caught for our crimes.”

"I suppose I can live with that." Sally said dramatically, "But Wilbur, question- who is going to come after us, Charlie? Niki? Would they really hunt us down?"

"Maybe Niki?" Wilbur suggested though he wasn't sure. Niki was very sweet and a bit quiet. She didn't seem like the violent type, though Charlie was even less so. The guy was smart, but an absolute goofball.

"Good point. I love her, but she's terrifying." Sally agreed, glancing at the tent they shared. "She threatened to stab someone the first day I met her."

"She did?" Wilbur said, eyebrows raised. That...now that he thought about it, that wasn't entirely out of the realm of possibility.

"It was Schlatt." Sally admitted "And then another guy too, who had actually stolen from the store she worked in. Schlatt was jsut being an ass. I was debating letting her stab him since it might be funny."

Wilbur's laugh carried far off into the night.

It was a market day. Wilbur had spent most of the day on a street corner, an empty bucket on the street, playing his guitar. He hadn't gotten much- some gold, some iron, one precious emerald, and a couple of diamonds from someone, but all around it had been a good day. The problem was his mind wouldn't shut up. Or perhaps it was his heart.

When he thought about it, it was both of them, heart and mind, at war with one another over the most trivial and most important of things. Love.

Sally was probably the most beautiful person Wilbur had ever seen. Her hair was like fire-red, sure, but it seemed to flicker in the sunlight, moving and dancing, with a light almost its own. Her eyes, a beautiful sea green sparkled with life and mischief, and passion. Her smile was infectious and her laugh sounded like fresh air.

Her determination matched his own, and she had a deep, fierce compassion that Wilbur could never, ever hope to match. She was fiercely protective, to the point she'd needlessly throw herself between her friends and danger, and had a sense of adventure ten miles wide. She had a temper and wasn't afraid to shout. She wasn't perfect, but to Wilbur, that made her even better. He'd only known her for a little over a month, and perhaps it wasn't rational or anything like that, but Wilbur knew himself and he knew that love wasn't rational.

Wilbur was in love with her and wasn't even afraid to admit it. Well, he might've been a little afraid to admit it to her, but Niki had cornered him, and he'd spilled his guts instantly, despite himself.

(Niki claimed she was human, but Wilbur wasn't entirely convinced that she wasn't some sort of witch, because every time she gave one of them the Look, they caved. And her bread, holy *shit* her bread was in no way just normal bread, but that wasn't the point-)

“You should tell her.” Niki had said, patting his back gently. “She likes you, Wil. Don't be scared to go for it.” And Wilbur wasn't scared, it was just... okay maybe he was scared. Wilbur had flirted with girls before when he managed to leave the house or hit the one decent city in their server every few months, but that didn't exactly lend itself to high confidence with relationships or love confessions.

“I know she likes me, Niki,” Wilbur said, a little helpless, “But what if she doesn't *love* me.”

Niki just gave him a fond smile. “Wilbur, it'll be fine, I promise. Besides, I've never known you to be a coward. You've got this.”

Wilbur gave her a grateful smile.” Thanks, Niki, you're right. I'm going to tell her, tonight when we get back from the market.”

“Good luck.” Niki said with a warm smile “But you don't need it.”

A few hours later, when he and Sally stumbled back to the campsite, hand in hand, he pretended not to notice the ‘I told you so,’ she whispered as they passed by. It was easy, with the way Schlatt started loudly complaining .

“God, lover boy, right in front of my salad? Disgusting.” He shouted.

“You've never eaten a salad in your life, JSchlatt.” Wilbur retorted “Fuck off.”

“You two disgust me,” Schlatt said flatly ”Don't start making out here, or I'll throw up! Hey-ow!”

“Don't be an ass.” Sally teased, and Schlatt rubbed his head where her left shoe had hit its mark.

Ender, Wilbur, was so in love with her.

Wilbur wasn't looking at his communicator.

It was sitting in the very last spot in his inventory, and he hadn't touched it since he'd met up with the others. It had been almost two months since he'd left home and he'd yet to touch it. There was no reason, of course, it's just that... well, he didn't exactly need to look at it, did he?

He was always with, or within yelling distance of at least one of the others, and they usually had theirs on. If he was in the market, he was with Niki helping buy food, or with Schlatt, haggling prices. When they were exploring abandoned servers, they rarely left the large group, but he was usually with Sally or Schlatt, one of them at his back as they explored old abandoned temples, looting things left behind by those long ago. Charlie was always at camp, or with Wilbur, providing a decent accompaniment to his street corner performing when Wilbur desperately needed money, or perhaps just wanted to show off.

The other could check the coordinates and Wilbur could easily remember them, without having to input them in memory or in chat. He had no need for messages.

So, Wilbur had no need to check his comm. None.

And it had nothing to do with how many messages were on there. Or perhaps a lack thereof.

Wilbur wasn't avoiding checking because it might be filled with messages from Tommy and from Tubbo, perhaps even Phil, if he'd ever pulled his head out of his ass, asking him where he was, or cursing him out.

And it certainly wasn't because he was worried that there wouldn't be messages. That they... really didn't care. That Tommy maybe, just maybe, didn't want him back. Had told him good riddance. That Technobalde, the bastard, had sent him taunts, telling him of what he and Tommy were doing. Of what Tommy had become.

Because it didn't matter. It didn't matter if they had messaged him or not because Wilbur wasn't there. They weren't his responsibility. They hadn't cared so he wouldn't either. They hadn't needed him and Wilbur didn't need them now.

He didn't need to know. He had Sally now, and Niki, and Charlie, and Schlatt, and they actually cared. Sally held his hand and night and now slipped into his tent with him, allowing him to pull her close. She pulled him into dances in the rain and inspired the best songs he'd written so far.

Charlie always knew how to make Wilbur laugh, and kept him from stewing in his own thoughts. It was almost like he had a fucking timer that dinged when Wilbur started overthinking, and he would appear with a stupid idea on how to piss off Schlatt and could talk Wilbur into it with only a grin and a few words.

Niki always knew just what to say to make him feel better when Wilbur didn't even know he was upset. She made the best bread and despite being quiet, he was deceptively strong and vicious, when it came to her convictions and those she cared about. She checked on him on nights when Wilbur couldn't sleep and left Sally asleep peacefully, never pushing, just offering him a blanket

And Schlatt? Schlatt could be an absolute bastard. Loud, rude, and always in Wilbur's face spewing insults that Wilbur could dish right back. But Schlatt was smart. He was funny. Wilbur trusted him, because despite all that he had also gone to bat with a creep on the street for Niki, and had broken some asshole's hand, who was giving Charlie shit for being a mob hybrid. He had never pressed about Wilbur's past when they were talking and challenged Wilbur in ways he'd never been challenged before. He pushed him to make his own choices, even if they directly contradicted Schlatt's.

These people cared about him. About Wilbur.

And so Wilbur didn't worry about what might or might not be on his comms. He didn't.

~~(He never stared at the top of his tent and wondered, tempted to grab it, and certainly, never, ever did he catch sight of someone with golden hair on the street accompanied by dark brown, or a flash of pink and red, or a green cloak and let his breath catch in his throat. Never)~~

There was no point.

“I’m bored,” Charlie whined, flopped on the ground, flat on his back, spread eagle. “We should do something”

“Yeah, well, we’re *broke* .” Schlatt grumbled, “So unless that something you want to do is strip mining, we’re kinda stuck.”

Wilbur hummed from where he was patching up a shirt Niki had torn a few days before, sALLY leaned up against his back, half asleep. He wasn't the best with a needle, but he was far better than the others. After seeing them wearing sloppily patched clothes one time too many, he couldn't take it anymore and had taken it upon himself to ensure that they didn't look homeless.

Even if they technically were homeless, they could at least look presentable.

“Emerald mining is the worst.” Niki grumbled, “And it’s hard to mine legally on most of these servers for long enough to even find them.”

“I know that.” Schlatt snapped, “That’s why we aren’t doing that.”

“Well, Schlatt, how are we getting emeralds then, stealing them?” Wilbur snarked, rolling his eyes. “I don’t condone stealing.”

“No guys, we could do jobs.” Niki suggested “Or sell things. I could sell my baked goods-”

“Booooring” Charlie interrupted “If I wanted to do that I’d have stayed at home.”

“No, big guy,” Schlatt said. “We aren’t going to steal them, we’re going to scam people for them.”

Niki frowned slightly but didn’t protest.

Wilbur grinned at the look on Schlatt’s face. “Now that, my friend, is a plan I can get behind.”

“This is a bad idea.” Niki said, “No one is going to believe you, Wilbur, like, literally no one.”

“You don’t believe in me?” Wilbur asked, bringing a hand to his heart. “I’m hurt, Niki. Just watch and learn.” Wilbur was dressed like a priest, with long flowing purple robes, and a hat

that even he had to admit was absolutely ridiculous.

Niki was wearing similar garb as his, but instead of a hat, she had a glittering choker, made to look like precious jewels, but was really just smashed lapis, worth nothing. What, they were broke and trying to get emeralds “We can’t get away with pretending to be priests. They expect a miracle for the festival! Besides, isn’t it a little mean to scam these people out of their emeralds?”

“If they’re dumb enough to believe the miracle that we are going to pull off, then it isn’t mean, it’s on them,” Wilbur said with a smile before he grabbed Niki’s hand and stepped out onto the stage.

“You sound like Schlatt,” Niki muttered and Wilbur ignored her, because he didn’t have time to address that.

This was exhilarating, honestly, putting on such a show. They weren't hurting anyone, but knowing that they were pulling a fast one on someone. This, someone, was an entire group of people. An entire city, expecting the traveling priests to perform a miracle at a ceremony in their honor.

Schlatt was already standing on the stage, dressed in the same outfit that Wilbur was, down to the stupid hat. It looked even more ridiculous on Schlatt than on Wilbur, and when it was over, Wilbur was going to be sure Schlatt never heard the end of it, but it would be so worth it, for the number of emeralds that they were getting from this.

“Oh, people of this beautiful town,” Schlatt called and the restless crowd stilled in front of them. It was a small town to start with and only about twenty-five of the maybe seventy residents had turned up, but really, that was more than enough. They just needed a few idiots “We, the great priests of the order of Mseli, have come to *bless* you today.”

“The great Mseli is merciful to those that obey. The great Mseli gives blessings freely to those that follow him.” Wilbur grinned and spread his arms wide, “And we will prove that to you tonight.”

A murmur rippled through the crowd. “We have called up an afflicted among you humans, a woman cursed to live halfway, half-human, half-fish, a hybrid tapped between worlds.”

Niki, wheeled a tank they had crafted the night before, filled with water, and Sally was inside. It had been a bit of a sell and took a bit of work, but Sally was a fish hybrid of some sort. When in water, she could, if she chose, activate her hybrid traits, breathe underwater, and develop fins then ran down her back and arms.

Apparently, her mother was some sort of rare merling, and her father a human with latent hybrid genes, that allowed her more control over her traits than most hybrids had. She had been hesitant to put them on display, but it was a small crowd, and a big payout, if it went right.

Besides, with a few touches, such as the dark makeup smudges under her eyes, and her hair floating wildly around her, she looked rather... feral. Wilbur shot her a grin, and Sally bared

her teeth.

It took a lot not to laugh. As Sally was wheeled to the middle of their makeshift stage and left, while Niki came to the forefront.

“Now,” Schlatt said, “Our high priestess will summon the great Mseli. Wilbur turned his back to where Niki was standing to watch the crowd, then bowed his head dramatically,

“Close your eyes, or risk losing your sight, to the great summoning!” Wilbur cried “The power, the light, is too much for the mere human eye! Only our priestess can gaze upon his true form in summoning.

Wilbur cracked a slight eye to see most of the crowd hesitantly closing their eyes, and Niki began to recite, in Greek, the phrase “Charlie, get out from under the stage now dude.”

Charlie, wearing what looked like a toga, crawled out from under the stage. His glasses were slightly askew and his somewhat green skin glinted strangely in the dim light.

“I am the great Mseli” Charlie yelled, pitching his voice much deeper than it normally was and far more dramatic. “I have been summoned by my priests, to perform miracles to convince those that doubt. So I shall heal this woman first, curing her of her affliction.”

Charlie then reached down into the tank and grabbed Sally by the wrist. He closed his eyes, and moments later, Sally reverted back into her human form. She scrambled from the tank, and Niki threw a robe to her, to cover her soaked dress. The crowd gasped, fooled by the rare hybrid transformation, as Niki hustled Sally off the stage quickly.

“See how he has blessed her? How he favors us?” Schlatt called. “See? He favors those that believe!”

“Now let the blessings begin!” Wilbur cried, throwing his arms wide, “For only two emeralds, Mseli can bless you too!”

(That night they each left with pockets full of emeralds and were long gone by the time the townspeople realized they’d be scammed. He pretended not to notice the way Niki looked at him in slight concern. There was nothing to be concerned about.)

--

“Come on guys, it’ll be fun!” Schlatt goaded, eyes glinting a little dangerously.

“I don’t know Schlatt,” Charlie said, rubbing the back of his head. “I’m exhausted. Besides, I’m not really a huge fan of water.”

“You were willing to do the lava one, but not this one? What the fuck slime.” Schlatt asked, throwing up his hands.

Charlie shrugged. “What can I say, dude, I’m a man of mystery and intrigue.”

“Niki, Niachu,-” Schlatt started, but Niki didn’t even let him finish.

“No Schlatt.” Niki said “I’m tired. I want to rest, we *just* got here.”

“Yeah, but it’s the only one that opens for three weeks,” Wilbur said giddily. They’d never gone to a modded server as a family- Phil had never taken them anywhere as a family, but Phil had said they were a waste of money and Techno had believed the same thing. Wilbur thought it was a fun way to be risky, without having to risk your actual fucking life. “It’s the new one they’ve got and it’s book up unless we go tonight!”

“Sally, my darling, my love, my-” Wilbur tried, grasping one of her hands.

Sally snorted.” No. Babe, I’m not doing it. I’m literally a fish hybrid. It will be so, so boring if I go.”

“Why don’t you two go?” Niki suggested. “We don’t mind. We can pick out a different one when you get back, but we want to rest.”

“Boring. All of you. Boring motherfuckers.” Schlatt declared “Wilbur is the only one of you I can tolerate and that’s just sad. C’mon big guy, let’s go have fun.”

Wilbur laughed “Alright, alright. We’ll see you guys soon, ok?”

Sally gave him a grin and waved him on “Don’t have too much fun without me! Be careful!”

“Always am!”

“Have we met before?” The worker asked, squinting at Wilbur. “You look familiar somehow.”

“I’ve never been to this server before.” Wilbur said honestly,” And I’m very sorry, but I don’t believe we’ve ever met.”

“I don’t know...” The guy trailed off, his orange eyes studying Wilbur intently, mouth twisted into a frown. “I swear I know you from somewhere.”

“I’m certain,” Wilbur said, tamping down the slight unease he felt at the man’s insistence. “I’m very good with faces, and I’m certain we’ve never met before. Now, unless you’re willing to give me a friends and family discount, can I please just pay and move on?”

The man frowned “I guess... but hold on a second!” He turned over his shoulder “Mari! C’mere!”

A hall cat hybrid, with gleaming green eyes, jogged over. “What’s up, Jea?”

“This guy, do you know him? I swear I’ve seen him before,” he said, motioning to Wilbur, who was fighting the urge to tap his foot impatiently. Why the fuck couldn’t they just let him pay for this?

“I don’t know you all.” Wilbur tried again, getting a little bit impatient. All he wanted to do was play the mod server, and Schlatt was waiting. Schlatt didn’t do waiting well and would be insufferable all evening. “I’m very sorry, but I don’t.”

They seemed unperturbed by his protests, as the woman narrowed her feline eyes at him. Then, like a light switch turning on, she brightened. “O! He looked like that guy! Do you remember those kids? And the scary asshole? He kinda looks like the guy they were looking for.”

Wilbur’s stomach dropped. Shit. “Oh yeah! Their brother, right?” The first guy said, turning back to study Wilbur with renewed interest “Ender, they were assholes, and annoying, but paid well enough. Do you know them? If you did, they only left yesterday and I’m sure you could catch up to them-”

“I don’t know anyone like that,” Wilbur said flatly, trying to keep the slight panic from seeping into his voice, even as his heart pounded jackrabbit fast in his chest. “I have no brothers and have been traveling with a group of friends for months. Now, are you done prying into my personal life and things you obviously know nothing about?”

“No need to be an asshole dude.” The first guy, Jea or something said with a snort. “You’re very defensive for someone with nothing to hide, that’s all I’m trying to say-”

Wilbur grit his teeth as the guy rambled. Why the fuck were Techno, Tommy, and Tubbo looking for him? Why was

“Hey, are you giving my good friend here trouble?” and suddenly Schlatt was beside him, a strong hand clamped on his shoulder. “Cause if you are, then we’re gonna have problems, buddy.”

Schlatt, to Wilbur, never looked particularly intimidating. Maybe it was because he was taller than Schlatt, or he knew that Schlatt was really, mostly harmless, but Wilbur didn’t find himself scared of the man. The same couldn’t be said for the worker, now that two people were looming over him, and Schlatt, well, he *could* look a bit intimidating if he so chose, from his simple aura of ‘I’ll fuck you up.

“No-no I was just-” Wilbur pinned him with a glare and the guy put his hands up in surrender “Nevermind! No issues here.”

“I don’t know, Wilbur here seems pretty upset.” Schlatt said, “I mean, look at the guy, he’s fragile and now you’ve gone and upset him!”

Wilbur was going to murder Schlatt. It wasn’t hard to make tears spring into his eyes. “He just kept insisting that I knew him! Or that- people were out to get me!” Wilbur’s voice dropped into a horrified whisper “Are they with the rabbits?”

“Oh ender,” Schlatt shouted, throwing up his hands. He turned to glare at the worker, who just looked confused, so so confused. Good. Fucker. “Look what you’ve done! We just got this bastard over the paranoid delusions that made him think rabbits were trying to kill him, and now you tell him that people are after him?”

“They’re after me? Do you know me?” Wilbur said, letting his voice wobble. Ender this was *humiliating*. But, watching Jae’s rapidly growing confusion *was* funny, and he trusted that Schlatt had a plan. “I-I can’t believe that- I don’t.”

“It’s okay, big guy,” Schlatt said, patting Wilbur’s back comfortingly. “You’re gonna be just fine, ok? This guy doesn’t know shit, does he?”

“No, I don’t!” the guy interrupted, looking vaguely panicked. “I was wrong, now that I look at you closer, you uh, look nothing like that guy! He, uh, he had, um, green hair! My bad!”

“Really?” Wilbur asked, teary-eyed. “I don’t know...”

“Really!” The man assured him desperately. “I swear. I’m so sorry!”

“You should be.” Schlatt said darkly, “I oughta go to your manager, or hell, your admin and complain-”

“No!” The worker said, “No please don’t!”

“And why shouldn’t I?” Schlatt said, putting his hands on his hips. “Look at him! You fucked up a perfectly normal guy- gave him anxiety!”

Wilbur’s let out a small snuffle. “Rabbits... oh god, I’m going to die.”

The retail worker’s panic grew. “No, please!” he practically begged. “I’m already on probation and I can’t lose my job. What if, uh, I offer you a deal! Normally it’d be ten emeralds, but I can do it for eight instead.”

Schlatt nudged Wilbur lightly and he let out a sob. Jae paled “Five?”

Schlatt pretended to consider it, while Wilbur stared just past them, in his best imitation of a thousand-yard stare. “Yeah, I guess that’ll work.” Schlatt said, pulling out four emeralds and slamming them down on the table, as he snatched the keycode from Jae’s hand “But you better watch it, pal. I’ve got my eyes on you after that little stunt.”

Wilbur allowed himself to be dragged off by Schlatt, leaving the poor worker confused, scared, and six emeralds short of proper payment.

Wilbur’s eyes instantly dried, the second they were out of eyeshot. “I had it under control, Schlatt,” Wilbur whined, growing at his friend, who snorted.

“Yeah, you couldn’t even get them to take all ten emeralds, and I got us in for four. You’re welcome.”

“It wouldn’t have worked if I hadn’t started fake crying.” Wilbur countered. “And that is embarrassing. Delusions? Really?”

“It worked.” Schlatt said waving him off “Besides, I could literally see the irritation radiating off of you dude. What the fuck was that guy on about that pissed you off so much? Are there *actually* people after you?”

Despite Schlatt's easy tone, Wilbur could pick up the vague note of worry in it and that was the last thing Wilbur wanted. He didn't want them to be worried about him. He didn't want Schlatt or any of the others digging into his family. He wasn't ashamed of them he just.. Ender he was still so angry. He was *angry* .

Yeah.

Wilbur's jaw tightened. He didn't want to explain that his father had made him a half parent, and had favored Technoblade who refused to even admit he was part of the family, and that his younger brother had gone batshit insane just like tEchno Yeah, no thanks, that was no one's business but his own. Besides, he didn't even want to see any of them right now. If ever. "No. And even if there was, I wouldn't care"

Schlatt put his hands up in mock surrender "Fair enough dude, I won't press. Just want to make sure that no one is coming to slit our throats in our sleep. I mean, if any of us could piss off dangerous people I feel like it'd be you."

"Fuck off Schlatt," Wilbur said, shoving him roughly, though it was playful. Mostly. "You're the one who almost got us killed in a Pillager raid."

"No, no," Schlatt said "You do not get to blame me for that one! Charlie is the one who tripped and fell! We'd have been fine if fuck clutz hadn't fallen."

"Oi Slime was only following your lead," Wilbur said, glad to fall back into an argument where there was no real heat. "Your stupid plan was the only reason he was close enough for the trip to alter them."

"My plan was perfect." Schlatt protested "And I want to hear nothing else about it since you literally almost burned down a church, fucko "

"Bastard." Wilbur shot back "I hate you and wish I'd never met you. You're ruining my life."

Schlatt cackled "Yeah, right Wilbur. I'm the best thing that ever happened to you."

"Sorry, Sally takes that prize." Wilbur said, "And If there is to be a fight for my affection, I'm afraid you might lose, Schlatt."

"Yeah, she's terrifying." Schlatt agreed, dropping the bit. "Now come on, let's join the mod before the idiot we scammed scrapes his jaw off the ground and grows a big enough pair to report us,"

Chapter End Notes

1) sorry for the serious stuff at the start, but I felt like it needed to be addressed. anyway, I hope that you all enjoyed the almost 9k words I wrote. I wanted to include one more

scene but I couldn't justify writing more when this chapter was already double the intended length lol.

2) kinda hate this chapter. I felt like I couldn't hold onto Wilbur's character and that it was just all over the place, but I've been working on it since like early April so I'm finally over it. There will be another chapter somewhat similar to this in about 5-6 chapters, I think.

3) Next chapter will be back to our regularly scheduled Tommy, Techno, and Philza POV's. Big things are planned for that. Also, buckle up, the plot is about to go zoom. I'm really about to step on the gas, y'all don't even know. come yell at me on tumblr at @iregretallmydecisions and I might write faster

4) I don't have much else to add tonight bc I'm very tired. So, as always, let me know what you think, go take a walk, hydrate, care for yourself, remember that life is more than what you feel right now. Eat if you haven't today and please get some sleep. And please, be kind to each other. Good day/night

(ALSO happy pride month!! Technically it isn't june here yet but It will be by the time AO3 finally sends the notif so lets go LGBTQ+ community!)

are you stuck in your own ways?

Chapter Summary

Tommy goes through many emotions

Green might be Philza's color, but he needs to get a grip.

Technoblade and Tubbo have a nice little chat. There is also fire.

Chapter Notes

TW: kinda a panic attack at the start of the chapter. Pretty much ends when Tommy gets to the deck and dialogue starts. Mentions of suicide and past suicidal thoughts

If you get confused, in Phil's pov it is a flashback (to like 30 minutes before lol), in regular it is present. I tried a new style, hopefully, it isn't too confusing. I won't do it often, thought, so if you hate it don't worry.

enjoy!

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Whatever crew member had been stationed outside the door must've been relieved by the fake captain, because when Tommy burst through the door, there wasn't anyone there to stop him. The halls were too fuck small and somehow felt even smaller as he sprinted through them. They were just as empty as before, apparently fucking cleared out for him.

His chest was tight, in the dim halls and his heart thundered in his chest as he made his way through the same route he'd memorized earlier, only because of the ingrained paranoia he'd developed after far too many traps and times getting lost underground.

Fucking hell he couldn't breathe. His chest burned with exertion and it felt like the way something lodged in his throat, as he clumsily slammed against a wall, his own damn feet tripping him up. The book wasn't here. The book wasn't here and they'd wasted two months. Two fucking months, chasing it instead of Wilbur. Two months wasted, looking for a book that maybe didn't exist when Wilbur was out there.

It wasn't even Phil's fault. Phil had looked. Phil had looked hard (he'd spent weeks, months, looking, barely sleeping at night and how had Tommy repaid that kindness? That help he

probably didn't deserve? By screaming at him? No wait, it wasn't-)

Tommy's head was spinning, and he slammed into another wall, tripping over a raised board in the floor.

Fucking hell why had he agreed to this? Why had he agreed to do this for Karl? The egg wasn't even that much of a threat. It hadn't really done anything had it?

Tommy had fucked up again. He'd wanted to play the hero, and he'd fucked it up again.

Things could still go so, so wrong, and it'd be his fault.

Tommy wasn't crying, but he was too tired to cry. He couldn't. And not when he couldn't breathe, not in the dark walls, (they were wood, not stone, this wasn't that, this was wood-)

Fuck he needed to get out. Get away.

It felt like an entirely, before Tommy was scrambling up the steps, back into beautiful, beautiful daylight.

He took a deep breath of air, his lungs finally, finally filling with air fully, since he'd first gone below deck and let it out with a shudder. He forced air in and out a few more times before the buzzing in his head quieted and he became acutely aware of how many people were standing on the deck.

Not all of them were staring at him, no most of them appeared to still be doing their tasks, but enough were staring at him. "The fuck are you looking at." he snapped, baring his teeth at the crew members who were staring at him with what looked like pity, or concern. Fuck off.

These people didn't know him. They didn't get to be concerned. Even this Puffy, she didn't know him- She wasn't the same Puffy. He couldn't trust her now more than he could trust anyone else in the past. She was a stranger, who didn't care about him. Wouldn't care about him. If Tommy had his way she'd never have to meet him again, as much as that thought was a bit fucking painful. He hoped neither of them ever set foot on that ender damned server. Tommy had been a fool to think any of this was a good idea. He should've just kept his mouth shut and pretended that Karl was crazy.

He should've set out after Wilbur on his own, if anything, and ragged him home, or anywhere that wasn't that server.

Maybe he should've just stayed dead

"Hey kid," someone said and Tommy's head snapped up. The crew members were not giving him a wide berth, but someone neither the man from earlier nor the first crewmate, but another guy all together, was approaching him. He was dressed much like Puffy was, though an axe glinted from his back, rather than a sword at his side "You alright?"

"I'm fine. Fuck off." he snapped, finally releasing his hold on the railing he'd been desperately grasping. "I'm leaving."

“Not so fast.” The guy said, shaking his head. “I know that the guy you were with, he hasn’t come up yet. I can’t let you leave until he leaves.”

“Why the fuck not?” Tommy snapped, glaring at the man who was just at Tommy’s height. Good, he didn’t have to look up at the fucker.

“Captain’s orders. Well, more her policy. “He amended “You need to stay here until both of you are leaving, helps prevent thievery, and you can’t go get any back up to attack our ship.”

“What the hell, I don’t have backup!” Tommy shouted, drawing looks from a few crew members. He glared at them, curling his upper lip slightly. Fuck them.

“Kid, I would like to believe you, but I have no way of knowing that.” The man explained patiently. “Now, listen, I can walk you back down there-”

“No” Tommy snapped. “I am not going back under the deck.”

He couldn’t keep from shuddering slightly. It was too ark and too narrow. And knowing that down there was both Phil and Puffy and the shattered plan- Tommy snapped his jaw shut and shook his head. He wouldn’t go back down. He’d throw himself overboard first.

“Alright, alright.” The guy said, holding up his hands. “Well, you need to stay out of the crew’s way, so that they can do their jobs. They won’t bother you unless you bother them okay?”

“I’m not a child, I can handle myself.” Tommy snapped. I don’t know you, so stop being so-so fucking nice.”

The man, whose name Tommy still didn’t know, held up his hands. “It’s okay mate. Just, go sit over there by the nets and stuff. I’m sure it won’t be long before your dad will be back up here and you can leave.”

Tommy bit back a protest and swallowed. Gine,” he snapped, and stalked to the edge of the deck, where there were in fact crates and a pile of nets. Tommy stared at them, before scampering to the top of the pile of crates so that he could have a better view.

The deck was swarming with people, though, that was perhaps an exaggeration. There were only about twenty crew members on the deck, and Tommy hadn’t seen any below, though he was sure that some were probably in the sleeping quarters or behind any number of the closed doors, he vaguely remembered passing on his desperate dash out.

Tommy ignored them. Normally he’d try and talk to them, annoy someone, but mostly he was just tired. He hadn’t slept well since they’d joined this server, and his sleep wasn’t honestly all that great, to begin with and his nerves were shot to hell. The night before he’d barely caught two hours, broken up by anxiety and fragments of nightmares he couldn’t remember or care enough to dredge up. His normal nights were only somewhat better, but his fights with Phil had left him too charged, and the prospect of sleeping just wasn’t appealing to him.

Tommy's hands were still shaking slightly, much to his dismay, so he scowled and balled them into fists and stuffed them into the pockets of his somewhat battered cargo shorts. He had another pair or two he'd packed stuffed in a bag, but that had been left with Technoblade. All he'd brought with him was one other pair, that was actually in his inventory, but they were just as worn. He'd need new ones soon, but he may as well wait until he'd grown more, since Tommy knew he'd grow at least another couple inches.

Fuck, maybe he'd grow more since he wouldn't be starved this time. That probably hadn't done wonders, spending months eating only potatoes in Pogtopia, then what happened after, his diet hadn't exactly been... steady.

Tommy couldn't help but snort a laugh. MAYbe he'd be as tall as Wilbur, the lanky motherfucker. The thought of Wilbur twisted something in Tommy's gut. Wilbur was mad at him. He had to be. He was ignoring Tommy's messages and that was the reason. He didn't want Wilbur to be mad at him, but at least Tommy knew how to handle that.

Wilbur screaming at Tommy was nothing new, even if he much preferred the brother he'd woken up to, all those weeks ago, but Tommy knew what to do with it. KNew how to talk Wilbur down and if it came to it Tommy knew how to take a punch, if that's what Wilbur needed to stop being mad.

Because there were no other options. Wilbur was fine and was just being a stubborn bastard. There simply wasn't another fucking choice.

Despite being in the sunlight, Tommy's head pounded with the remnants of the headache from his head spinning, and he wanted nothing more than to get back on dry land and maybe crawl back in bed. He probably couldn't get to the actual way off-far too many armed people and he hadn't been able to talk his way out. Tommy twisted around and peered over the edge of the ship. It was a sheer drop, down the sun-bleached oak planks, crusted with sea salt, down into the deep blue waters of the harbor. It wouldn't kill him, the drop, since the water would prevent any fall damage, but it was deep. The cliffs on the side of the dock were man-made- smooth stone early ten feet above the water's edge.

Tommy could probably make it if he risked the jump. and really, it would be fine, but his stomach still twisted slightly at the thought of the jump into deep water.

"Long way down huh?" Tommy certainly didn't startle at the sudden voice to his left. He might've let out a string of curses that would send BadBoyHalo to an early grave if he was within earshot. Captain Puffy was standing just to the side of the crates he was perched on, smiling up at him, like he hadn't just called her every horrible name he knew.

"Sorry, sorry, didn't mean to startle you." She apologized, holding up her hands. "But yeah, I wouldn't recommend jumping. It's farther than it looks and the water is cold."

"I wasn't going to jump." Tommy snapped, unable to help himself. He tore his gaze from Puffy to behind her, scanning the deck again for Phil. Tommy couldn't see him. His frown deepened.

“Sure.” Puffy agreed in a way that Tommy knew meant she didn’t believe him. “Also, that was impressive stream of curses. Hell, I’ve got crewmates who don’t know all those words.”

“What, are they pussies or something?” Tommy snarked. “It’s not that uncommon.” unease was gnawing at his chest. He could trust Puffy, more so than most people, but this was odd, this conversation that seemed light, but somehow was far harder to navigate than if she’d come out yelling. He still couldn’t see Phil.

“Nah, it’s just that you honestly sound a bit like a sailor,” Puffy said, which, that was a fucking weird thing to say. Why was Puffy even talking to him? Where was Phil?

Before Tommy could get a chance to cut her off, Puffy barrelled on. “And, if you want, I could make that happen.”

Tommy’s brain ground to a halt. Wait, what the fuck? All he managed was to splutter for a moment, like an absolute fool, before managing a “ *What ?*”

Puffy looked both a bit hesitant and determined, which was a contradiction, but one that the Captain wore well. sHe’d given that look to Tommy more than once, in the future and Tommy had no fuking clue why she was giving it to him now.

“Well, you don’t exactly seem happy traveling with your- with Phil. I know that you really don’t know me, and I don’t know you, but... my crew is big, but we always have room for one more. And, shit, I’m not making sense, but Tommy, what I’m saying is, if you don’t feel safe, or... anything like that, you can stay here. I know you don’t have a reason to trust me but-”

“Stop,” Tommy said, and it was only because he was too tired to even really feel shit that he didn’t start crying, like a pussy. Damn Puffy, and her optimism and kindness. “Just stop. Just shut the fuck up.”

“Tommy, listen I know that you don’t trust me-”

“That’s the problem, Captain Puffy,” Tommy said and was proud that his voice didn’t waver. “I do- I do trust you. You saved my life, remember? But I have to stay with Phil.” It wasn’t a lie, but it wasn’t the truth either. Puffy had offered him patience and kindness before, and he’d thought it was perhaps out of pity, but there she was doing it again when she didn’t even have a reason to pity him.

Puffy frowned “Tommy, no you don’t. I know who Philza is, and while he cares about you, if you aren’t safe-”

“Phil won’t” Tommy choked for a moment as his brain processed that Puffy knew who Phil was and she was still doing this. Offering him a life. Adventure. He could throw away the book, let Philza leave, and never have to leave this server. Never have to worry about the Dream SMP.

Part of him longed for it. Take Karl’s stupid book and fling it into the ocean so he’d never have to see it again. Maybe he could do this, sail the seas, cause Chaos, but maybe not too

many problems. Remove himself from the equation.

But he'd promised Karl. And Wilbur... Wilbur might still go to the SMP, might still die. Tommy wouldn't be able to protect him. And Tubbo.

If for no other reason, egg and Wilbur and all that other shit, Tommy couldn't leave Tubbo behind. Not like this. He worked his jaw for a moment, dredging up the energy, the courage to finally speak again.

"Phil won't hurt me. We have our problems, yeah, but... he's not fucking abusing me or some shit. And I don't know what he told you, but... I have to do this. I have to find the translation book. Or, at least move on. I can't- I can't stay here. So please don't ask me to."

Tommy closed his eyes, halfway waiting for her to start yelling, telling him to get off her ship then. sHe didn't have the book and he wouldn't stay. There was nothing left between them now, except memories that only Tommy had.

"He said that you needed help. That you were hurting." Puffy supplied quietly after a moment. Tommy opened his eyes, surprised by the gentle and almost sad tone in her voice. "And that he cared for you. He does care about you, Tommy. I believed him, but... you looked scared. I had to make sure, you know? I knew you wouldn't stay, though, not with how devastated you looked when I said I didn't have the book."

Tommy gave her a puzzled look. "Then why the fuck did you offer?"

A strange look passed Puffy's face for a split second before she gave him an easy grin. "You looked a little stressed kid. The open seas are a good cure for that. Besides, one of the rules on my ships, all three of them, is that we take care of kids. Half my crew joined as teenagers."

"All three ships?" Tommy asked, eyebrows shooting up in surprise "You have more than this one? What the fuck, how rich are you?"

"Pretty rich," Puffy said with a proud grin. "Those two smaller ones, right over there? I'm the Captain of those two. We're standing on *The Fool's Luck* right now. The other two are *Dolphin Strider* and *Brig o' Bane*. Don't tell anyone, but of the three, *Dolphin Strider* is my favorite- the crew will argue for days of which one is best if we get them started."

That startled a laugh out of Tommy. "They're fucking ships, how can you have a favorite?"

"I just do, it's about the feeling, Tommy," Puffy said with a chuckle. It almost felt like old times (future times? Fucking time-travel), something familiar, if Tommy squinted just right.

Beside him, Puffy's smile dimmed. "I need to admit something to you. I lied, earlier- or well, I told you a half-truth. I have a copy of the translation book. Phil and I are going to work out the payment and it's yours. Well, Phil's, I guess, since he's the one paying."

"What?" Tommy breathed, for what felt like the fiftieth fucking time that day. Anger and relief sparked in his chest because Puffy had fucking lied to him, lied to both of them, about

having that book, bringing down months of work, but she'd also lied. She was letting them have the book. Or buy it. "Are you fucking with me? Because that isn't funny," Tommy demanded. His hand automatically twitched to reach for his sword but aborted the motion at the last minute. This was Puffy. This was the past. Violence would probably just get him fucking impaled.

"I'm not joking." Puffy said "I'm sorry I lied, but.. We've had very powerful, very dangerous people come after the book, just so that they could have it. Have that power, you know? I initially assumed that Philza was one of those people, because, well you know,"

Tommy snorted. He did in fact know. "He's a scary motherfucker? Yeah."

"But I couldn't quite figure out why he wasn't being threatening or using his reputation. If I hadn't really known what he looked like, I doubt I would have recognized him with his wings tucked up so tightly behind him. But he didn't admit who he was until I called him out and... Tommy. I have no idea what's going on between you and Phil, but he is worried about you. Very very worried. I just needed to make sure the two of you weren't trying to take over the world or something."

"No worries about that." Tommy said "Phil's 'retired' or some shit. But.. I guess that's fair enough"

Tommy knew all too well about people using things for power over others. "Well, I'm still sorry I lied... Phil and I discussed payment options, and he's considering them now, so I'm going to head back down there and the two of you should be on your way in the next few minutes. You can come down there-"

"I'll stay here." Tommy said, instantly, cutting her off "I don't want to be in the way, or some shit. Besides, I want to leave. No need to take any extra steps, that's shit. I'd rather stay here, doing big man shit. ."

Tommy wasn't certain that Puffy bought that reasoning, but she didn't press it. "Alright, Tommy." She said "Well, it was good to meet you- or remember you, I suppose. Phil should be back up in a few minutes. You're more than welcome to stay where you are."

Puffy made it about halfway across the deck before she turned around "Oh! And Tommy, that was a standing offer."

Tommy swallowed hard and closed his eyes against the sea breeze as Puffy disappeared beneath the deck of the ship.

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Phil had the translation book tucked not just in his inventory, but in his enderchest, nestled between precious gapples and a few of his other most important or prized possessions. It almost didn't feel real, after months of searching, and the emotional rollercoaster they'd been put on. It was safe. It was real. He'd held it in his hands and now had its stores in the safest spot he could think of.

Phil was glad to step back out onto the deck of the ship. Though Tommy apparently was far more freaked out by enclosed spaces, Phil's instincts much preferred the open space, where he could easily take flight if need be.

Phil spotted Tommy on the edge of the ship perched on a set of crates, an odd look on his face that Phil couldn't quite place. Phil could 't quite place Tommy's expression all that much these days and it made him uncomfortable. He used to be able to read Tommy like a book.

Now he needed a damn translator.

Okay, even he had to admit that was a weak joke.

"Toms!" he called, as the crew gave him a wide berth. Word certainly traveled fast on a ship, didn't it? "Ready to go?"

Tommy's mouth pressed into a thin line briefly, before a wide grin split his face. It didn't quite reach Tommy's eyes, as the lanky teen slid off the crates and strode to Phil's side. He hovered just out of arm's length. "Yeah! You got the goods, big man?"

Phil, despite the hesitance in Tommy's eyes nad their admittedly rocky week, couldn't help the smile- the real smile that broke out "Yeah mate, I do. We finally got it.

"What'd you have to pay?" Tommy asked "Puffy said that the two of you were working out a payment? Was it a bunch of emeralds and shit?"

"Something like that." Phil allowed as they made their way down the plank. The sun had long since passed its highest point, as was working its way swiftly toward evening light. "Let's talk while we get some food, what do you say mate? I'm fucking starving."

"A favor." Puffy said, leaning forward n her chair; hands pressed flat against the table "I will only ask that of you, is that perhaps, one day, if I ever needed you, or needed a hand with something, I could call on you, and you'd be there."

It was only years of practice that kept Philza's expression neutral. "You want a favor from the Angel of Death," he repeated flatly. His son... Tommy had trusted this woman, to some degree, but he did not trust her with a favor from him. In the right hands, Phil knew he was a powerful weapon. Owing a debt was like putting a bomb in the hands of someone who didn't quite know how to work it.

Phil bought a good dinner, with fresh bread, fresh fish, vegetables, and each of them a slice of cake to celebrate, and took it back to where he'd left Tommy waiting in a park near the water. In the distance, Phil could still see the Fool's Luck floating in the harbor. He wondered what the crew was doing. When they were leaving. He thought it would be soon, based on the flurry of activity on the ships.

"I want a favor from Philza Minecraft." Puffy corrected, staring at him with bright eyes. He wasn't quite sure what she meant by that. She rose from her desk and Phil's instincts had him

tensing. "Relax. It looks like you need some time to think this over. That's fine. You can stay here and think about it. I'll be back in a few minutes."

Phil didn't get a chance to protest before she slipped from the room and the door was closing behind her.

"So Puffy talked to you?" he asked, attempting to be casual, as he handed Tommy his food.

Tommy's face lit up at the sight of the food. "Yeah," Tommy said, around a massive bite of fish.

"Chew first, mate, please." Phil half-begged. Tommy flipped him off but swallowed his food before speaking again.

"Yeah, she came and talked to be about shit while you were, doing whatever the fuck you were doing below deck."

"I was considering the price of the book," Phil said carefully ". What did the two of you talk about?"

"Mostly boring shit," Tommy said, ripping a chunk of bread off with his teeth. Phil did have to admit that fresh food, instead of that taken from their inventory, was much better. "I did learn that all three of those ships were hers which was fucking nuts. How the fuck does she have three ships?"

Something in Phil's chest eased slightly. "Oh, is that all?"

Of course, there wasn't much to think about. Loath as he was to admit it, Phil would agree to yet another favor, if that meant that they got to keep the book. He could potentially try and steal it, or take it by force, but alone, against a crew of people that were well trained, separated from Tommy... That wouldn't end well. Perhaps if Techno were there to back him up...

But Techno wasn't. And Tommy had seemed genuinely excited, for a moment to see this woman. Phil had seen very little genuine excitement from Tommy since he'd... woken up in the past.

The door swung open. He wasn't sure how long he'd been alone, but Puffy returned, and Phil had no idea what she'd been doing. "Have you made a decision?"

Tommy looked away for a moment. "Yeah mostly. She tried to talk about feelings and shit a little, but I can't say I'm surprised. She was my fucking therapist in the future you know? Or, well, at least one of the only people who didn't seem to hate me."

That wasn't supposed to be a barb, based on Tommy's tone, rather, just reminiscing, but Phil still flinched. That perhaps explained Tommy's excitement at seeing her. However, that didn't mean Phil didn't catch what was almost certainly the lie Tommy had told about what they talked about.

"I see." Phil said finally "So she wasn't a pirate?"

"I'll do it. I'll owe you the favor, in return for the copy of the translation book." Phil said, as soon as the door opened, and Puffy stopped in. Perhaps it sounded a bit desperate but he was desperate. Had been desperate. Was tired of being desperate. "We'll sign a contract and call it done."

Puffy's eyebrows shot up "That... was a far easier sell than I anticipated it being." She said and it almost sounded like a joke. "I'm also surprised that you didn't try and kill me for it."

"I considered it." Phil said with a shrug "But I don't know where you keep the book, and believe it or not, I prefer not to make enemies."

"Nah," Tommy said " But we all still called her captain, since apparently she was pretty well known for that. She was pretty fucking cool then. Seems even cooler now, honestly. Who fucking knows why she joined that server. She seemed to have a lot better here, on this server."

"Maybe she wanted to explore more." Phil suggested "I dunno mate."

There wasn't much else to say, it wasn't like they could ask Puffy, and Phil could provide no insight. Silence fell over them for a moment and Phil took a bit of his dinner if only to busy his hands.

Puffy gave him a long look as she circled back around her desk. Phil wouldn't go quite so far as to say it was unsettling but it was piercing. Phil met it with his own steely gaze. "I'm not quite sure you understood me."

Puffy sat across from him and there was something akin to dread pooling in his stomach. "What do you mean?"

"You still think that I want something from the Angel of Death. I don't." Puffy said "I want a favor from Philza. From Tommy's father. Your word is far more meaningful to me as a person than as a weapon."

"Who fucking knows. She was probably duped like the rest of us. Promised greatness and then just got our shit blasted into nothing." Tommy grumbled.

Phil didn't like that he knew how literal that sentence was.

"Puffy seemed like a very nice woman," Phil said because he wasn't entirely sure how to address Tommy's comment without platitudes that would only make Tommy angry. He must've said the right thing because Tommy rewarded him with an easy grin.

"She's one of the best women." Tommy agreed. "Fucking Poggers, she is. Even in the past. I was kinda worried, but she's still pretty much the same."

"Why aren't you demanding diamonds and emeralds, or, I don't know, asking me to bring down governments so they'll stop bothering you?" Phil pressed, "Why are you...."

"Being so kind?" Puffy supplied gently. Her eyes dimmed slightly "You came to me as a parent, Phil. Not a mercenary. Not the urban legend. Not the Angel of Death. A worried

parent of a kid who was very obviously hurting. It isn't my place to dig and I will respect that. But..."

She took a deep breath "Not many people know this, but I was a parent once too."

"But, enough about Puffy," Tommy said, turning back to Phil as he demolished the last of his meal. Tommy still ate like the food was going to vanish from his pate, but it wasn't as bad as those first few weeks before Phil even knew what was wrong. . "You got the book? Can I see it?"

Phil hesitated- it wasn't exactly safe to get it out when anyone could walk up, but really, who was around? And who would know what it was? They'd probably think it was some old book and it could easily be hidden safely away in Phil's enderchest.

Tommy's face fell momentarily and that was all it took for Phil to relent. "Hold on a sec, it's in my enderchest."

Phil placed his enderchest between them, throwing a glance over his shoulder to ensure no one was lurking behind them, and then opened it. Tommy's eyes glinted with excitement and apprehension. Phil produced the book and handed it to Tommy, who had even bothered to wipe off his hands. It didn't look impressive, to be honest. It looked... like a regular book.

Phil almost asked a stupid question, but the look on her face was enough of an answer. Even as she turned her gaze down Phil could feel empathy for that. His sons were alive (as far as he knew, a traitorous voice whispered) and blessedly so. Phil knew that in another timeline that had not been the case. The grief, the guilt, of knowing that there had been a world where that was true was horrible. He couldn't imagine living with the actual loss of a child.

"I'm sorry," Phil said quietly, and there was little else to say.

"It's been more than ten years," Puffy said, turning to face Phil. Her voice was steady, but it did nothing to mask the 9 "You don't get over it, really, but I... I would hope that someone would do the same for me, or my child, if.... Philza, I understand that there is nothing you wouldn't do, or give to keep your child safe."

Tommy opened it, with a reverence that was uncharacteristic of his youngest. "Holy fucking shit." Tommy breathed, blue eyes wide "This is... Phil, it's *real* . It's real. We can... we can... we can figure out what the fuck happened."

"I know mate." Phil said, unable to keep a grin back "We got that fucking book. It's yours now. It is a copy- Puffy didn't have the original, it was apparently lost, but a copy is just as good."

Tommy stared at the pages, flipping through them gently, and paid little heed to Phil's words. Phil didn't really mind.

"Fuck, I never thought we'd make it this far," Tommy admitted though it seemed to be more to himself than Phil. "It....shit, this is fucking, it changes everything"

“So I won’t ask you to tear down governments. I know you would, but that isn’t what I want. It isn’t what I need. I know you would, but... it doesn’t seem right to ask that of you.” Puffy admitted, cracking a crooked grin, tension dissipating... “I won’t say I’m the paragon of morality, since I’m a pirate, but I do have standards.”

Phil couldn’t quite identify whatever emotions were swirling in his chest. “Thank you.” is what he finally settled on. “I don’t know- I just- -thank you, Captain Puffy.”

She grinned at him, seemingly understanding what he was trying to convey, or at least pretending to. “Now, about that book...”

“That it does, Toms,” Phil said, the nickname slipping from his lips without thinking. He half expected Tommy to balk at the familiarity, as he had before, but Tommy didn’t seem to react, maybe still riding the high of the book. “We’ll start translating it as soon as we can”

“Maybe we can put Techno on it.” Tommy muttered “He’s a big fucking nerd, behind all his swords and shit. And it doesn’t exactly translate into modern English. It’s all, old-timey and shit.”

“Can I see?” Phil asked because really the curiosity was eating him alive. He hadn’t taken a good look at it on the ship, just enough to ensure that yeah, it really was a translation book, from enchanting table, before stowing it away safely.

The book was in his enderchest now, beside the contract he and Puffy had both signed. She had the other copy. “Pleasure doing business with you,” she said, offering him her hand.

He clasped it and gave a firm shake. “Agreed, mate.”

“Now, I’m sure you’re itching to go. I know Tommy is, so go. He’s waiting for you on the deck. My crew is keeping an eye on him for the moment, so he shouldn’t have gotten into anything too dangerous.” Puffy said with a smile. He halfway wanted to ask why Puffy had talked to Tommy, but that would do no good. He allowed himself to turn his back to her as he headed for the door, and was halfway out when she called to him

“Wait.”

Tommy hesitated, looking at Phil with slight distrust “It’s my fucking book, isn’t it? That’s what you said? Even though you paid for it? The book is mine,”

That was a challenge if Phil ever saw one. He tried for an easy smile. “I did say that mate. I just want to see the book. You can have it back. Hell, you can even put it in your enderchest. I just want to see it. That book is rare as fuck mate and I just want to look, but I can wait till later if you want.”

Phil really, really, really didn’t want to wait. He’d been the one that had sacrificed for the book, spent weeks searching for it, had torn down a government for it but-

“It’s not really my place and I know that, but whatever is going on between you and Tommy.” Puffy started and Phil bit down the automatic retort that no, it really wasn’t her place to

comment, especially since she had no fucking clue what was happening, but starting a fight not would gain him nothing, so he bit his tongue.

“But he's scared. He's angry. I don't know why, but he needs to trust you. He needs more patience than maybe either one of you thinks he deserves.” Puffy's tone was not angry, but there was a firmness to it that left little room for argument “Don't talk down to him, but.. Be gentle.”

Tommy seemed taken aback by his response, anger stalling for a moment. “Fucking... no, fine. You can look at it. But I'm putting it in my enderchest when you're done.” Tommy said, “And don't fucking try to put it back in yours.”

“Got it mate.” Phil agreed, and held his out, and let Tommy place the book in it, staring at him with confusion mingled with something like anger and fear. He relaxed only slightly as Phil flipped through the book.

He couldn't pour over it quite like he wanted, or how Techno would once he got his hands on it (Tommy was right about Techno being a bit of a nerd) while he was sitting in a park, but it was still fascinating, if only to the part of his that loved to explore. To discover. But Tommy's eyes were on him, so after only a few minutes of skimming through it, while Tommy picked at his cake from the corner of his eye, he cleared his throat.

“Fucking brilliant.” He said, “But you should put it in your chest now.”

Tommy snatched the book from Phil's outstretched hands. “Don't want any wronguns to get it. Fucking thieves.” Tommy snapped. He placed it in his enderchest almost immediately, placing the book inside, before breaking it again.

Phil turned to his enderchest and broke it too. Their dinner was mostly gone and Tommy had started rambling about thieves, though Phil was almost certain Tommy wasn't exactly innocent of that crime himself (though really, when did a little petty theft hurt anyone), and they had the book.

Phil allowed Tommy to ramble as the sun inched towards the horizon. In a few minutes, they would get back to the inn. Tomorrow they would pack up and start heading back toward the port. In the coming weeks, they'd search for Wilbur and translate the book, and who knows what else.

But, Phil was content enough to sit in the park with his son, while he rambled, laughing at the sheer ridiculousness of whatever convoluted tangent he was on, for at least a little while longer.

There was something of a threat in her words that Pil didn't quite understand. “I'm... I'm doing my best.” he said finally “I am not trying to hurt Tommy.”

“I know,” Puffy said and there was something in her words that felt a bit too much like pity.

She did not stop him when he left this time.

Technoblade was crouched in the bushes with Tubbo beside him.

“Are you sure this is a good idea?” Tubbo whispered quietly, as they stared at the darkened house. It had been laughably easy to send Tubbo in to rig the place with TNT while Technoblade easily dispatched anyone that tried to get in their way. Locations were easy to find, once they’d managed to find some jerk who worked for Heza and shake the information out of them. Literally.

Techno hadn't even done the shaking. He was going to pay the guy, but once Tubbo figured out that the guy they were talking to worked for the woman who sent mercenaries after them, he got right up in his face.

Tubbo... was intense, sometimes.

It was kinda funny though, watching a like thirty-year-old get ripped a new one, by a tiny teenager.

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Anyway,

Techno and Tubbo had rejoined the old server and gotten their information only hours after Technoblade decided to do this. It wasn't impulsive, because he had a plan. The plan was, destroy her houses (and therefore possible spawn points) then leave Tubbo in a very safe location while Technoblade committed some good ol' fashioned homicide.

As a treat.

The plan was honestly very solid.

“Cmon Tubbo, you're the one who really likes arson.” Technoblade pointed out.

“Good point. Let's blow this bitch sky fucking high.” Tubbo crowed, a little too loudly for Technoblade's comfort, though, to be fair, they were about to set off a massive explosion.

Techno allowed Tubbo to flip the lever that sparked the redstone, before grabbing Tubbo's arm and pulling behind the rocks he'd scouted earlier, to bracket them against the shock wave. “Cover your ears!” he called

Just as Technoblade dragged a stumbling Tubbo behind them, the whole thing exploded.

Well. That was a little dramatic. There really wasn't that much TNT, just a few strategically placed blocks, and that was enough to destroy most of it, and set the rest of it on fire. It was mostly made of wood, which really, fire was such an easy way to get rid of a wooden house. It was almost like she was askin' for some arson from a pissed-off customer. Techno wasn't a customer, but that didn't matter.

Chat clamored loudly in his head, loud and excited, but also not yet satisfied. Techno couldn't blame them

Arson!

Arson Pog

Blood

Blood

Arson!

Don't tell Dadza!

Fuck yeah!

Isn't TNT Wilbur's bit?

Dude, you're in the wrong timeline

Arson

Fuck you

Tubbo built nukes, bruh

Spoilers!

Techno still doesn't know about that shut the fuck up

Arson!

Fire!

The adrenaline pumping through his veins made him smile, even if no one could see it behind his mask.

Tubbo's eyes widened. "Fuck yeah." he breathed " Techno, can we do it again?" he asked, watching the fire.

Techno's grin widened. "If you promise not to tell Phil, we've got another house to take care of."

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"Technoblade," Tubbo said and Technoblade grit his teeth at the singsong way that Tubbo said his voice. He'd made the mistake of telling Tubbo that his name wasn't pronounced like that, and to quit. He'd be lucky if Tubbo ever said his name normally again. "Does Tommy... ever talk to you?"

“Tommy never shuts up, Tubbo,” Technoblade said, giving him a flat look. He had his mask on, but Technoblade was pretty sure Tubbo got his meaning. Probably. “Yeah, he *talks* to me.

“That’s not what I meant,” Tubbo said, a hint of frustration leaking into his voice. “Does he ever just... Say really fucked up shit and then not address it. And I don’t mean like, trying to be funny.”

“What do you mean?” Techno pressed, unsure if he knew where Tubbo was going with this.

“Like, okay, the other day, when we were in the lava mod, yeah? You were bridging toward us, he looked at me and said that he almost-” Tubbo was uncharacteristically serious. “He said he almost jumped, once, Techno. I dunno, what the fuck am I supposed to say to that? What do I do with that information?”

Tubbo let out a laugh, that if Technoblade was judging right (though he wasn’t necessarily sure that he was), sounded a bit hysterical.

Technoblade heaved a low sigh “Yeah, Tubbo I know. He... Tommy’s tryin’ really hard not to let us know everything that happened to him in the future. And I don’t think that we can make him. The best we can do is listen if he wants to talk, and try to make sure none of that happens again.”

“That’s fucking stupid.” Tubbo snapped, kicking at the dirt. “If he doesn’t want it to happen, why won’t he fucking tell us so it won’t.”

“Tubbo, I don’t know.” Technoblade said honestly “Tommy... this ain’t the Tomm that went to sleep in your house a few months ago. This one is very, very different. It’s a little easier for me since I wasn’t around as much, but... Tommy is trying to protect you. And himself. Pretendin’ it didn’t happen is way easier than addressing it.”

Technoblade knew that far too well, as Wilbur’s rage-filled face flashed in his mind. It was easier to pretend the hurt hadn’t happened or be angry about it, rather than talk about it. Not that Wilbur had even wanted to talk, at the end. Technoblade had been fine, ignoring him and pretending they hadn’t had that fight, but the dread that had settled in his gut when Phil told him about Wilbur’s death, even if it hadn’t happened... Technoblade knew one thing, and that he didn’t want Wilbur dead.

Even if Technoblade didn’t have the right to call himself family, if he didn’t belong, that didn’t matter Wilbur was... Wilbur was important to him, like it or not. He was important to Phil and Tommy, and Tubbo too.

“That’s bullshit.” Tubbo snapped. “Either really get over it or talk about it. Stewing and shit is just painful to watch.”

“I know what you mean. But the best we can do is listen, unfortunately. And uh, has Tommy told you anything else, concerning? Besides the whole...” Technoblade couldn’t quite make himself say suicide “lava thing?”

Tubbo shrugged. “Just talked about the war wasn’t as fun as he tried to make it sound I think. Said they had a traitor and got me, Wil, and him killed. Someone else too, I think, but I can’t remember if he told me their name.”

That was news to Technoblade. He wondered if that traitor was the person that Tommy had been so scared of. The one that he’d practically begged Technoblade to keep him safe from. “I see.” Technoblade said “That’s... dang, that’s not great. Countries are always the worst, huh?”

The joke fell flat, but it did earn a snort from Tubbo. “Alright, enough mushy shit, but... just keep an eye on him Blade.”

Tubbo said, jabbing Technoblade with surprisingly sharp elbows. “That... was the plan.”

“I thought the plan was arson,” Tubbo asked, eyes wide with faux innocence. Techno had seen those eyes glowing in the light of a house fire, full of glee, and knew better than to think him innocent.

“Yeah, that’s the main plan.” Technoblade agreed “Babysittin’ Tommy is just a... secondary objective.”

“Those are big words, my man,” Tubbo said solemnly. Techno frowned as Tubbo rubbed his head - that meant it was hurting again. “And don’t let Tommy hear you calling him a baby, that or you’ll be finding bonemeal in your cape for a month,”

“That’s a very specific threat.”

“Be scared, Blade,”

Technoblade would never admit it, but he might have been a little concerned.

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“No.”

“Please?”

“No”

“Pleeeeeease.”

“ *No* !”

“ *Pleeeeeeeee -*”

“I said no, Tubbo!” Technoblade finally snapped, and Tubbo’s mouth snapped shut, bottom lip protruding into a pout. Unfortunately, that had stopped working a long time ago on Technoblade so he leveled Tubbo with a flat look across the room. They were staying in an abandoned house.

Well.

It was abandoned because the apparent owner was the guy that Tommy had killed. That was probably kinda rude, but Technoblade didn't really care, and he'd yet to be haunted by a ghost. Besides, what could a ghost do? Scream at him? He already heard voices.

"I don't know why I have to stay here," he whined, flopping back onto the deadman's bed. "That's boring, techno, and you let me come every other time."

"We were just committin' arson," Technoblade said, trying not to snap. He'd already told Tubbo this. Multiple times. "Besides, I'm ender pearling, and I don't have enough for both of us to make it there and back."

"But what if you need back up?" Tubbo whined "Or die. Techno, if you die, then what am I supposed to do?"

Technoblade sighed. "I'm not gonna die, Tubbo. Technoblade never dies." he said with a smirk "Besides, do you really think so little of me, that a few puny mercenaries and one lady who won't even fight her own battles can take me out?"

"I watched you trip over your own cape this morning, Techno," Tubbo said, and it was painfully obvious the kid wanted to laugh at him. Brat.

"That was because you moved it!" Techno protested, "That wasn't my fault."

"Suuuuurreee." Tubbo drawled, rolling his eyes to the ceiling. "And so was dropping your sword on your foot too, huh, Technoblade."

"Shut up." Technoblade snapped "Or I'll run you through,"

"No, you won't." Tubbo said loftily "I'm much too valuable for that. Tommy would kill you for i."

"I ain't scared of Tommy, Tubbo," Techno warned, though, if Tubbo goes hurt, he might would be, on second thought.

"Hmm, what about Philza," Tubbo said, pushing himself into a sitting position.

Technoblade snorted. "Only idiots aren't scared of Philza."

"Very true, Blade, very true," Tubbo agreed.

"That's also why I ain't taking you." Techno continued and Tubbo made a face. "Philza would kill me, and I wouldn't stand a chance. Besides, your head's still hurting, isn't it?"

Tubbo's shoulders slumped. "... only sometimes," he said finally.

That was proof enough for Techno. "Then you don't need to go. It's dangerous to go when you might be injured still."

“Fine,” Tubbo whined, falling back onto the bed with a huff. “You’re a fucker, you know that Technoblade? A right fucker in fact-”

And with that Tubbo burst into some nonsense song about how much of a ‘fucker techno was’ and it took every ounce of willpower he possessed to keep from screaming. The song was one of the worst he’d ever heard, and that included Wilbur’s first two songs, that not even Phil had been able to successfully lie about liking.

Oh, and Techno was wrong. Tubbo wasn't just as annoying as Tommy, he was *worse* .

Chapter End Notes

1) 8k words again. Idk why this is the new normal but I guess it is. If you got confused, in Phil's pov it is a flashback (to like 30 minutes before lol), in regular it is present. I tried a new style, hopefully, it isn't too confusing. I won't do it often, thought, so if you hate it don't worry.

2) I made a playlist of songs that either relate to the fic or was very important in its formative stages. find it here:

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/65tzA3GQnItkzhpJN9Qu5R?si=66b2a13555ea4ae8&nd=1>

3) Puffy has exited the story for now. They have the book. Techno should wrap his plot up next chapter. The book search arc is coming to a close. yay!

4) Be kind. Hydrate. you know the drill. I love you all. you guys are some of the best readers ever.

(ps, if you came from tumblr, I cried when Puffy was offering him a place on her ship. no idea why that got me but it did)

Chapter 30

Chapter Summary

Techno goes feral, as a treat.

Tubbo is on his home alone arc, with 100% more death!

also headache explanations and guilt complexes

Chapter Notes

two chapters in a week? I gotta be crazy.

TW: Violence, blood, stabbing, death. Someone is burned alive but it is not detailed.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

“Are you sure I can’t come?” Tubbo asked, one last time, as he trailed after Technoblade, who was already dressed in armor and armed to the teeth with potions and weapons. They were still in the abandoned house from the night before.

Technoblade sighed. “Tubbo, I don’t have enough enderpearls for both of us. We went over this last night. You just need to stay here and stay out of sight. The last thing we need is you causing trouble while I’m thousands of blocks away.”

Tubbo slumped. “Yeah, whatever. I could fucking kick ass.”

Techno wanted to point out that the last time there was a fight, Tubbo got knocked out instantly, but that was probably a touch subject. Techno also wasn’t entirely sure that Tubbo knew Tommy had killed a man and bringing that up would just be awkward so- yeah he wasn’t gonna bring that night up.

“You, uh, kicked ass at arson. but you gotta stay here.” Technoblade said. “I’ll be back by tomorrow morning. Probably. Tomorrow afternoon at the latest.”

“What if you aren’t?” Tubbo demanded “Am I going to get to come to rescue the Blade? The blade, rescued by a fifteen-year-old! That’d be fucking hilarious”

Tubbo was scared.

He was trying very hard not to be, and to his credit, Technoblade had almost missed it himself. Though, he wasn't sure if that was really a credit to Tubbo or just a detriment to his own ability to read a room.

"You aren't going to rescue me," Technoblade said, the annoyance in his voice only partially real. "I'm Technoblade. I don't need rescuin'. Technoblade never dies, remember?"

"That's a lame catchphrase," Tubbo said loftily.

"Well, it's true," Technoblade said flatly. "But, hey, if, for some reason, I'm not back by tomorrow night, you gotta go, ok? Go find Phil for me. I'll be fine, but head for the portal and get outta here."

"That's promising," Tubbo said, and his voice was perhaps a little more serious than either of them would have liked. "If you die, I'm going to make fun of you forever."

"I'm not gonna die!" Technoblade said, repressing a sigh. "Has anyone ever told you you're annoying?"

"No," Tubbo said sweetly, and that was entirely a lie.

Technoblade rolled his eyes and stepped out the door. "Whatever. Now, I'm leavin'. Please don't burn the house down while I'm gone."

"No promises!" Tubbo cried joyfully, despite the now obvious nerves in his eyes. Technoblade obviously couldn't relate, because he wasn't worried. Not about either of them. Everything would be fine. It had to be.

Technoblade took a half-step out, before pausing and turning around. "Keep this on you at all times," Technoblade said gruffly, as he summoned one of his two toms and pressed it into Tubbo's palm, ignoring the look of surprise on his face. It would keep Tubbo safe if the worst did happen. "Loose that and I'll kill you." Technoblade snapped and didn't allow Tubbo another word before he turned on his heel and threw an Enderperal as hard as he could.

Shut up Chat, he wasn't *soft* .

Technoblade was a little bit of a liar.

He didn't enderpearl there.

Well, technically, if you want to get down to the semantics, he did enderpearl to the nearest town, but once he was there, he just found the nearest Nether portal and went right on through. The Nether was a dangerous place, even for someone like Technoblade, who had advantages. Piglins ignored him and most other creatures in the nether treated him as a fellow nether-dweller- or could be easily dispatched with his enchanted sword.

The heat wasn't really a problem either. His temperature regulation was better than most humans or nether creatures- he wasn't exactly kidding when he said he was just 'built

different' - so he could transition from Overworld to Nether without much problem.

Even still, with his armor, and sword, and biological advantage, the nether was a very, very dangerous place. One wrong step and you'd plummet into a lava pit so deep, it didn't matter what armor you had on or what potions you drank, you'd be dead. With Ghasts tryin' to knock you off and the risk of the netherrack crumbling beneath your feet, where it was precariously stacked into bridges, Nether travel was hazardous.

Technoblade couldn't bring Tubbo, especially not when he was potentially already sick or hurt, and not with how fast Techno needed to go. That's why he lied. The stubborn little bastard would try and follow him into the nether otherwise.

His pace was relentless, through the Nether. Phil hadn't exactly given a date he'd be back, but the estimate was right at a week or so. It had already been almost four days, between the planning and the arson they'd committed and Technoblade would rather Phil never learn about this little excursion.

Yeah, that wouldn't be ideal.

He picked up the pace.

Time worked in the Nether here- the magic ran well, unlike the server that Phil had called home for years- so he could easily keep track of time as he made his way through the hellscape that he'd been born into.

Finally, finally, he found the portal in the nearest town, based on the overworld coordinates, and stepped through the portal.

It had taken him a few hours, and Technoblade could feel the beginnings of exhaustion in his bones, but he rummaged through his inventory and pulled a grapple from the depths of it. Technoblade didn't much care for them but could use them more liberally than humans. His pigling blood helped stave off the addictive qualities, but he wasn't willing to eat them unless he had to. The risk wasn't exactly worth it, most days.

Today the risk was worth it.

The magic settled in his bones, almost as soon as he finished eating it, and he grinned sharply as his exhaustion waned. He stepped through the portal, unbothered by the swirling magic. When he stepped out, it was late afternoon. He was a little behind where he wanted to be, but the sun hadn't yet set, so it was fine.

The portal was on the outskirts of the town set up there for general use since this town was so far out from the rest of the server. It was a decent size- had to be, to be self-sufficient- but the black and white building glinting in the afternoon light stuck out like a sore thumb.

Technoblade reached back into his inventory, and he carefully pulled out potions. His nether blood made him more resilient to magic, too, less likely to burn out when potions were piled on. Humans could gain tolerance, sure, but the magic was far more forgiving to his body. So, without hesitation, he downed both a strength potion and a speed potion.

And he set off at a clipped pace. His skull mask was pulled down, covering most of his face, and his long pink hair was pulled into a tight braid that fell down his back. His crown gleamed on his head and his cape flowed behind him over his shimmering Netherite armor.

He did not bother to hide. He was certain that this woman, Heza, knew he was here. He wanted her to know who was coming for her. And based on looks alone was enough to practically clear the streets, as he strode down through the town square.

No one even spoke to him. That was just fine. He was not Techno now. He was ‘The Blade’.

The door of the house came into sight, Chat’s rumblings turned into a roar.

Blood for the Blood God.

Blood for the Blood God.

Blood for the Blood God.

Blood for the Blood God.

Blood Blood Blood Blood

Blood for the Blood God.

Blood Blood Blood

Blood for the Blood God.

Get her ass!

Blood for the Blood God.

Blood for the Blood God.

Blood for the Blood God.

Blood for the Blood God.

Blood Blood Blood Blood

Blood for the Blood God.

Blood for the Blood God.

There was a single guard stationed outside the door, a thin man, holding a sword. He paled as Technoblade made a beeline straight for him. His voice was steady though as Technoblade came to a stop just below the stoop.

“I’m here to speak to Heza,” Technoblade said gruffly.

“She’s-” The man swallowed, obviously scared in the face of the Blade himself, and Technoblade repressed a snort. Looser. He wasn’t even threatening” him specifically “She’s been expecting you.”

She had known he was there. Of course. “Can I come in, then?”

The man blinked “Uh, yes. Her office is at the top of the steps. She’s waiting.” He stepped to the side and Technoblade’s hands itched for his sword, to dispatch this man.

He settled on summoning his ax and slamming the hilt into the man’s temple. He crumpled easily, still breathing but unconscious. Technoblade glanced behind him and nudge the man off the edge of the stoop into the bushes. Oops. the ax fell back into his inventory.

He swung the heavy door open and it revealed a lifeless foyer, with glittering white and black stones, but he hardly cared for the interior design. He couldn’t see the guards, but he could hear shuffling in the far corner, so at least two were under the effects of an invis pot. Technoblade ignored them and climbed the ostentatious stairs (they were honestly pretty tacky, in his option. No one needed stairs that fancy.) to the door that was slightly ajar, certain that it was the office the now unconscious guard had directed him to.

He swung the door open, not armed, but ready to pull out his sword at a moment’s notice if need be. She was facing the door when he came in, and she wasn’t quite what he expected. Most notably, she had wings. An avian.

Phil had never talked about it exactly, but it wasn’t really a secret why there were so few avians left in the world. Technoblade was about to eliminate another of them.

“Technoblade. I see that Philza passed my regards on to you.” Her teeth were pearly white and her smile stretched slightly too wide and her voice was too warm. Technoblade already wanted to run her through. Well. More than he already wanted to.

“He did” Technoblade agreed, though Philza had most certainly not.

Silence lapsed as if she was waiting for him to elaborate, but Technoblade hated small talk, and with Chat screaming in his ear, he hardly had the patience to keep still and quiet, let alone try and have a nice little chat.

“I’m surprised. Heza admitted, though she hardly showed it. It was probably a lie.

Liar

Don’t trust her

Blood for the Blood God.

Heza my beloved

Fuck Heza

Liar

Blood for the Blood God.

She's lying.

Blood!

Hey, what the fuck dude?

Scary lady hot.

Bruh

She's lying

All my homies hate Heza !

Blood for the Blood God.

She's a liar

Blood!

Chat was insightful as always.

"Philza didn't seem eager to recommend me to you," she continued, face twisted into confusion as if she couldn't fathom why. It felt a bit like an act. "I've no idea why, I made him the man he is- or was anyway. He got soft though, apparently. I was half worried that you were soft too, considering my men reported that you cut them down protecting Philza's boys,"

"I owed Phil a debt," Technoblade said flatly. His voice was normally monotone, he knew that, but he wanted this woman to glean nothing from him. "But I'm not bound to him. I heard you make... good offers."

"Is that so?" Heza said, tilting her head in a bird-like fashion. Unlike when Phil did it, all curiosity and instinct, it made the woman look like a hawk, a predator, all part of a carefully constructed act. "Well, I suppose I understand that. Debts are an important thing to pay back. Philza taught you well there."

Something like cool dread curled at the base of his spine and Techno hated the implications of that phrase. "He... has trained me well." Techno settled on.

"So is that why you and one of those children burned down my other houses?" Heza asked and Technoblade didn't flinch. He'd have to be an idiot to assume she hadn't heard. It didn't matter she'd seen immediately through his pretense of peace. She'd be dead in minutes anyway. "You and one of those boys. I'm surprised you were dumb enough to bring him back here. You didn't hide very well. Try anything, and one message and my men could be there in moments."

Technoblade snorted, ignoring the cold pit of something like dread in his stomach. He'd left Tubbo sleeping peacefully. Tubbo had armor, but against all those people.. He resisted the urge to draw his sword on the spot. "Lady, I don't think you understand, that's not Phil's kid. It's not my kid. No, Heza, that's my apprentice."

For the briefest moment, there was a flash of uncertainty on her face before it fell behind her carefully created expression of disinterest.

"Is that so?" Heza said. "I didn't take you for the type to take on apprentices."

"I don't think you know me well enough to judge that." Technoblade said flatly. "If you knew me well at all, you'd have tried to have me killed before I ever made it here because I'm here to kill you."

Heza's wings flared like she was surprised that Technoblade would be so blunt, but before she could even move, Technoblade *lunged*.

People tended to think that Technoblade was slow, that his bulk made him a slow-moving target, and while he wouldn't pretend he was as fast and nimble as Tommy, or even Phil, Techno was faster than people gave him credit for. With the potion, that only increased it. She managed to twist out of her seat, but that wasn't enough

His sword sliced neatly through her right wing, at one of its weakest points, as he made it over the desk, her chair splintering under the force of his impact. He'd missed her chest, but that was fine, he thought, as she screamed in agony. Technoblade twisted his sword roughly before pulling it out. She rolled over, frantically scrambling across the stone floor.

Chat screamed in his head, the voices coming together only as they did in the very heat of battle.

Blood for the Blood God.

Blood for the Blood God.

Blood for the Blood God.

Blood for the Blood God.

The door slammed open behind Technoblade, and without even thinking, drove the sword down through the back of her wing. The floor was stone, but Technoblade's sword was strong, and gleaming with enchantments. Between that and the force of his bloodlust, it cracked the floor open, and drove down into it, effectively pinning her in place.

He already had his ax in hand as he sprang to his feet, meeting the blow of a sword, wielded by someone under an invis pot, considering the sword itself was floating, and a half suit of armor danced behind it.

He dispatched them easily, despite being unable to see exactly where he was hitting, laughing as their sword fell to the floor with a clatter.

Blood for the Blood God.

Blood for the Blood God.

Blood for the Blood God.

Behind you!

Duck!

Technoblade dipped low as he spun around, and an arrow whizzed overhead, from a man standing by the door, fully visible and shaking. beside him stood another woman with a sword, who looked hesitant. Cowards.

He lunged without thinking, vaulting back over the desk, letting the arrow ping harmlessly off his armor as he closed the gap. The woman lunged at his side, and Technoblade swung up with the flat of this ax, seeding her careening into the wall. On the downswing, he brought the ax straight into the crossbow, shattering it completely. The man stumbled back from both the force of the blow and the fear, but Technoblade had the ax through his weak iron armor in moments. He fell to the group and didn't dissolve. No respawn for him.

The woman was trying to get back to her feet, but Technoblade could only see red. The swipe of his sword sent her into a quick respawn. If Heza had any other guards they had long since fled, and only a fool would come back to fight him after a harsh respawn.

Behind him. Heza was desperately trying to twist so that she could pull the sword out of her wing without tearing straight through it. It wouldn't work.

Technoblade ripped the sword from her wing and Heza, in a feat of strength he wasn't sure she rolled onto her back. He slammed his foot onto her other wing and took satisfaction in the sickening crunch the brittle bones made under his foot.

"Wait!" she called, as he raised his sword, ready to kill her. He wasn't one for mercy so he didn't pause. Even if he wasn't, with the way Chat roared in his ears and the adrenaline of the blood lust, he'd be hard-pressed to stop for anyone. Blood on the ceiling, blood on the walls, blood on his hands, blood for the blood god-

"Wait! I can tell you about Wilbur!" She cried, throwing her hands up. Technoblade froze, his sword only inches from her neck.

"What?" he snarled, even as Chat went into stunned silence for a moment, before screaming louder than before.

Wilbur?

How does she know about Wilbur?

Blood for the Blood God.

Wilbur?

Technobro?

Blood for the Blood God.

Kill her!

Blood!

“Philza’s son!” Heza explained as if Technoblade didn’t know exactly what she was talking about. “I-I made a point after he came back to gather all the information I could about his sons. Wilbur is the oldest, and you all can’t find him. You’ve been looking for him.”

There was desperation in her eyes, fear, pain, and Technoblade didn’t care.

He pressed his sword to her throat “ *What have you done to him?*” he snarled.

“Nothing! I haven’t done anything-”

“I find that hard to believe.” Technoblade said “You sent mercenaries after me and I take offense to trying to be killed. You tried to get my- them killed”

“I just know where he is!” she cried “If Philza came back again, that was the information I was going to leverage with him!”

“Tell me where he is.” Technoblade snarled “Tell me what you know. Or why I shouldn’t kill you?”

“He’s- he’s traveling with other people! I don’t know their names- my sources hadn’t found that out yet, but they’re just server hopping, it looks like You haven’t found him, I have. If you kill me, what’s to say you’ll ever find him.” She said and coughed. The blood loss was getting to her. “Hand me my communicator and I can give you his last known location.”

Technoblade did it without thinking, swapping the device from the desk and tossing it to her, without thinking, his mind humming with the steady thought of finding Wilbur. That was enough distraction apparently because, by the time he realized what he’d done, it was too late.

“No!” he snarled as she gave him a bloody grin, stomping both her hand and communicator underfoot. She hardly seemed to acknowledge the pain, just smiling like the cat who ate the canary.

“Fool.” she hissed “I knew any friend of Phil’s would be a soft fool if I brought up the right loved one.”

“Where is he!” Technoblade demanded, “Tell me where he is.”

“I don’t know.” Heza spat with a laugh “I lied, Technoblade. I know about his group but my men couldn’t keep up. But, I’m certain that they’ll be more than capable of keeping up with your little *apprentice* .”

The sword was through her throat before she even finished.

She looked half surprised, that he'd actually killed her as if she'd thought she could still talk her way out.

Technoblade thought she'd respawn, and was ready to take every life she had, but her body lay still and broken at his feet. She'd lied about that too. Pity. He'd wanted to take every life and bleed her dry. He'd wanted to take his time, the way chat demanded.

But he didn't have time.

He had to get back.

So, blood-soaked and angry, the Blade left the house behind. The townspeople would wonder, maybe they'd loot it, maybe they'd be sad. He didn't care. He had more important things to worry about.

'Trouble on the way. Get out of there' Technoblade typed the message, blood smearing across the keys of his comm. He didn't have time for anything longer. He just hoped Tubbo listened and got out of there, fast.

Tubbo was bored.

Really, really bored.

Technoblade had left him behind, which was just fucking unfair, and the stupid blood god or whatever could suck a dick.

It was lame, sitting in some random abandoned house, with nothing to do but wait until Technoblade got back.

He'd already rummaged through all the trunks, most of which had been looted, but one seemed to have an abundance of redstone, and a few redstone parts, which were interesting. He had always wanted to mess with it, but if things went wrong he could potentially, maybe, set the whole house on fire, and while he was 667% sure Techno had been joking about him not burning down the house, he really didn't want to make that a reality this time.

He'd gotten enough of his house-burning urges out of his system already, though he definitely wouldn't protest if Technoblade actually pointed him at a house to burn down. Or more TNT! That had been fun!

It would have been more fun if Tommy was there, but hey, you win some you lose some. Tommy was off probably having a great adventure with Philza fucking Minecraft. Tubbo got to have fun too!

But he was still bored. AND not even allowed to go into town! Tubbo wanted to buy shit! Or steal it! Or convince stupid adults that thought he was some sort of soft baby into buying expensive shit for him.

Though, Technoblade had asked him to stay out of sight and out of trouble. While Tubbo wasn't usually one who listened well.... Technoblade was going off to do something rather dangerous, and Tubbo, despite having been knocked out cold, was aware that someone had actually tried to kill him.

Which.

That was fuck up, wasn't it? Tubbo didn't really want to die, you know? Despite what Wilbur claimed when Tubbo was little, he did have better self-preservation instincts than Tommy.

And besides, Technoblade had given him a totem of the undying. That was fucking nuts. Those were rare as hell, and Techno had given Tubbo one. While it was reassuring that Tubbo wasn't going to die, even if he did get stabbed or something, it wasn't exactly reassuring that Technoblade, infamously emotionless and cold, had been worried enough to give Tubbo a totem.

Which, Tubbo was also pretty sure the Blade wasn't nearly as emotionless as he pretended to be. The guy was actually a big softy, once you got past the apathy, murderous rage, and voices he apparently heard in his head. Techno himself hadn't admitted to that, but Tommy had told him about it and... yeah. That actually explains lots of weird shit about him.

His headache didn't help.

It was the weirdest fucking headache of his life, to be fair, and didn't even really feel like a headache. It was more... specific than that. Tubbo didn't know how to describe how it felt other than stabby. Like the time a skeleton got him in the leg, but far less intense. Sometimes it felt like his head was going to split straight open though.

As if the mere thought irritated it, his skull gave a throb and Tubbo rubbed it gently. It was getting worse and that was a bit worrying. What if he developed amnesia or some shit from that fight? Or what if his brain exploded, oh what was it called? An anemia? Aspirin? Asterisk? Aneurysm! An aneurysm!

Could fifteen-year-olds have aneurysms?

Tubbo didn't really want to find out.

His comm, which he'd had out fucking around with the setting earlier, buzzed on the kitchen table, where he was laying on his back, staring up at the ugly ass granite ceiling. Really, did these people have no taste? He rolled onto his side and picked it up. Maybe it was a message from Tommy? Maybe they'd left the whitelist server so his messages could go through!

It wasn't from Tommy.

Technoblade : *Trouble on the way. Get out of there.*

Tubbo frowned. Technoblade was telling him to get out of the house, but Tubbo liked the house, boring as it was. And he had been bored. Besides, how much trouble could it really

be? And honestly, where could he go? Towards town, where trouble was coming from? Or into the woods at night where he was probably going to get shot by a skeleton or something?

No thanks. No, this was his stupid hideout and he'd make those fuckers that had already tried to kill him once think twice before they messed with him again/

Tubbo sat up and grinned. Sure there *might* be trouble on the way, but his name wasn't Tuberculosis Trouble Underscore for nothing. The trouble wasn't prepared for him.

(well, it wasn't really his name, but it was close enough)

Whoever trouble was, they were *slow* .

Tubbo had been running nonstop for nearly forty-five minutes, and nothing had happened. No one had shown up yet. Nothing had happened.

Lame.

Whatever. That just gave Tubbo more time.

Now, Tubbo would admit that he didn't exactly have the range of supplies that he wanted, or needed to pull off his plan, but, there was enough redstone and enough gunpowder he could pull off *something* , that would make the bastards after him think twice.

He made what was, in its final form, basically just some landmines.

It was dark out, and the pressure plates were easily hidden on the ground, with a block of TNT under each, with enough redstone running between them, that if even one was tripped, they'd all blow.

Of course, that took nearly all the redstone and all the gunpowder he had, so if it didn't work he was fucked, but he was almost certain it would. Like. almost 100% certain. He wasn't sure if it was enough to kill them, and Tubbo didn't really want to think about it because while he obviously didn't want to die, he wasn't entirely sure how he actually felt about

As much as he joked, that was more of Technoblade's thing.

But, he wasn't going to sit like a lame duck or run off and he really wasn't the best at actual fighting, but he'd won the last three prank wars on traps alone, and Tubbo wasn't going to just let those assholes waltz in like they owned the place!

(okay so what if Tubbo didn't own the place? He was there, duh? The fuckers could kiss his ass)

After he'd used all the TNT he'd made (which it wasn't all that much, but he didn't have any more gunpowder and didn't exactly have time to kill creepers) he went through the house and took every source of light he could find, torches and lanterns, plunging it into darkness. It

made a target for mobs, but he was pretty sure the humans were of far more imminent concern.

Then, he scrambled up onto the roof, donning the diamond armor that Technoblade left him, and the iron sword in the first slot of his inventory. He wasn't sure he could use it very well against a human who could fight back, but maybe it at least looked intimidating, and settled on the roof, squinting into the dark forest.

Turns out Tubbo had an impeccable sense of timing because about two minutes later, a group of five came crashing through the woods.

Tubbo was a little offended that they only sent five people after him. He had to be worth at least like seven right?

"Is there ever anyone here?" One of them said, rather loudly, "The house is dark!"

"This is the location we saw them, last idiot." Someone, a woman by the sound of it snapped.

"Maybe he left. The Blade could've warned him." Another suggested.

Oh! Doubt? Maybe they would leave? Tubbo could just crawl back down into the house, and not have to worry about dying. That would be nice, honestly, even if it would be a boring outcome for all his hard work- "There he is! On the roof!"

Well shit.

"Come and get me fuckers!" Tubbo called, jumping to his feet. "Or are you scared?"

An arrow landed at his feet, embedding itself in the wood of the roof. Oh shit. They were actually trying to kill him. Right.

5

As Tubbo scrambled down the back of the house, he could hear them shouting, and a few more arrows whizzed in his direction, but he slipped easily in through the broken skylight dropping down into the uppermost room of the house. He opened the door and scrambled into the hallway. He'd probably need to bait them through the traps for this to work.

4

As he scrambled through the hallway, he carefully stepped over his own traps, which were difficult to see in the low light.

3

He needed to get to the front door so that they came through the right way. If they made it to the door at all.

2

Tubbo paused in the door frame between the kitchen and living room, bracing himself. He wasn't sure how big the explosion was going to be, but no way one of them didn't step on a plate.

1

And based on where they were, any second now....

Boom .

The windows rattled harder than Tubbo anticipated and he was glad for the bracing. Huh, maybe he'd made more TNT than he anticipated. His ear rang for a moment as he staggered to the front window, to see... holy shit.

His trap had worked, blowing everything to void and back, leaving a ditch several blocks deep and twice as wide going around the entire house. A few of the trees behind it seemed to have caught on fire, casting a weird light through the window he was peeking out of. Despite the darkness, Tubbo could see three figures still standing. Or, well, in various stages of standing.

One was staggering back into the woods, while another was sprawled awkwardly on the ground. Tubbo could only tell they were alive because they rolled over onto their stomach. The other was up and staggering straight for the house. Shit.

They didn't look great, considering they'd just had the ground blow out from underneath them, but Tubbo really wasn't sure what he was going to do. He wasn't exactly great at fighting, ok? Even with the handful of lessons Technoblade had given him, he didn't know if he could take on a trained fighter.

He dashed up the steps, throwing a few bottles of honey he'd found behind him to make the steps a slippery mess, before charging into the room with roof access. He wished he had a lava bucket, but unfortunately, he was fresh out. Fuck.

He shoved a heavy chest in front of the door, then scrambled onto the roof as his mind whirled with plans. He'd not seen the other two and had to assume they were probably dead or had run off. Didn't really like the implications and running for his life wasn't the best time for a moral crisis so he'd think about that, hmm, maybe never. It was fine. His heart pounded in his ears and below him, he heard the front door slam open.

"Where are you, you little bastard?" Someone shouted, a man by the sound of it. "I'm going to kill you, and string you up by your ender damned intestine!"

Tubbo frantically checked his inventory. What did he have on him? String, a sword and ax, some bread, a steak, some coal, a few bits of redstone, one thing of gunpowder, a flint and steel, and.... Spider webs. He'd gathered them as a joke, after enchanting a pair of shears ages ago and had almost forgotten about them, but had decided to take them with him. Just for fun.

Tubbo rolled onto his stomach and pulled them out. He had just enough to cover the broken skylight. He crawled as quietly as he could and placed them so that there was no way to get onto the roof without going straight through them.

Tubbo risked a peek over the top of the house. The one guy was still laying on the ground, not moving, and whoever had stumbled into the woods hadn't come back. Tubbo slid back down and came into a crouch, just out of sight of the skylight.

Below him, he heard a shout and a series of thumps that sounded suspiciously like someone falling down a set of stairs. Tubbo bit back a laugh. Fuck that guy.

Of course, that didn't stop him, unfortunately, and a moment later the heavy footsteps came back up the steps and down the hall. There were only two doors, and unfortunately, he picked the right one first. It took a couple tries to get the door open but he burst into the room as the door splintered. "Think the roof will keep you safe? I'm coming up there you fucker." the man growled and Tubbo pulled his sword out, but unfortunately he fumbled, and it clattered loudly as it slid off the roof onto the ground below.

"Shit!" he cried as the man hoisted himself up. He apparently hadn't seen the cobwebs, because he shouted in anger. Tubbo couldn't get his sword and his ax was hardly sharp enough to cut a tree, let alone cut through the man's armor, battered as it was. Fuck. He was fucked. What else did he have?

The totem weighed heavy in his pocket as he desperately tried to come up with a plan. He could almost feel it burning against his skin, as if somehow it knew he was going to die. Which was fucking *bullshit*. Tubbo underscore wasn't dying today.

"Fuck." the man snarled, drawing his own sword. "I'm gonna kill you as soon as I get my hands on you, you brat--"

Tubbo's hand found the flint and steel and he lunged forward just as the man broke free of the cobwebs. He struck them together and flames jumped from Tubbo's hand right onto the man's tunic.

Tubbo scrambled back, letting the flint and steel slide off the roof as he scrambled for the highest point. "You can't run anymore." the man snarled as he drew his sword. "And you missed, there, whatever you were doing."

Tubbo wasn't sure if it was because the tunic was so thin, or if something else caused it, but the man only made it a few more steps before his eyes widened and he realized just what had happened. Tubbo laughed, though it wasn't exactly funny as the man's eyes widened in horror, his sword falling to the wayside as he desperately tried to pat out the flames that were climbing, despite his armor.

He lunged for Tubbo again, with an inhuman screech, as if he was going to tackle Tubbo, but Tubbo closed his eyes and kicked out with his left leg Hard.

His foot connected with the man's chest, and threw him off balance, stumbling back until he tumbled right off the edge of the roof. Tubbo frantically patted at his own pant leg, which

was starting to burn.

Tubbo heard a sickening crack and thud from behind the house but couldn't bring himself to peer over the edge. When there were no other sounds, beyond the flames crackling in the trees and the sound of mobs in the distance, he let out a long breath. He carefully climbed onto the flattest part of the roof and collapsed onto his back with a sigh. Ender, he was tired. The adrenaline crash was very real apparently.

He should probably stay awake for Technoblade, but he was tired and the idea of moving was difficult. He hadn't been hurt, but apparently staying up for hours motivated by fear could tire anyone out. Besides, his head was pounding and it felt like it was going to split open. He just wanted to close his eyes...

Eh, a message would probably be good enough. He pulled his comm out of his inventory and typed out a message to Techno, eyelids heavy. He typed out a quick message letting Techno know that everything was all good, before allowing himself to doze off. The roof was nice and mobs couldn't get up there, so he would be fine.

He was just going to take a little nap...

--

Technoblade was almost out of the nether when his comm buzzed.

Tubbo_ : *skk fuihd hjhe Tekjno* .

... what the fuck did that mean?

Had they found him? Was that some sort of desperate attempt at contacting Technoblade because Tubbo was cornered? Technoblade's mouth twisted into a deeper frown. He couldn't think like that. He needed to move. Fast.

Tubbo?

Is Tubbo ok?

Go, go!

Technosoft!

Kill the bastards that touched him

Tubbo's fine guys

Go to Tubbo!

Technoworried?

Tubbo!

Blood!

Tubbo!

Go to him!

He needs help!

Lag lmao

Technobro?

Technoworried?

Technoblade shook his head pushing Chat's useless and confusing rambling aside. He didn't know what that meant, but whoever was after Tubbo better pray that they had more than one life left because none of them were getting out of there alive.

--

Technoblade landed harshly as the enderperal yanked him unceremoniously all the way back to the house they'd been staying in. Or, at least close enough,

He'd already seen the fires burning in the distance, between the two pearls it took, and it looked now like the whole edge of the forest was burning. He'd landed in some sort of crater, and it looked like several explosions had gone off.

There was smoke everywhere, from the bruins trees and Technoblade caught as he hauled himself out of the pit he was in. The smell of burnt flesh came from somewhere and the growing dread in Technoblade's chest trend ice cold.

His sword was drawn, but the area seemed quiet. Too quiet, beyond the fire. He crept toward the house, eyes sharp, but there was no movement. Not even any light inside. The sky was just beginning to lighten around him, casting an eerie grey light. No one came out to greet him, and no attacks rained down.

If something had happened to Tubbo... Tommy would never forgive him.

Phil would never forgive him.

Technoblade wasn't sure he'd ever forgive himself.

It was obvious someone made it in the house, based on the destruction. Things had been overturned, and there was blood splattered in a few places. Most notably, the bottoms of the steps. The steps were strangely sticky as if something hadn't quite dried on them, and Technoblade frowned. It wasn't blood but he was' sure entirely what it was. Potion residue?

His blood turned to ice when he saw a door splintered in half, seemingly beaten down.

Technoblade picked up the pace and stepped over the splintered door, and the roughly placed chest, half afraid of what he'd find in the room.

It was empty.

Technoblade let out a long sigh. "Where are you Tubbo" he muttered, taking in the disarray of the room.

That's when the roof above is creaked, and Technoblade looked up to find a shattered skylight, and a familiar face peering down.

"Tubbo," Technoblade said and couldn't stop the physical slump of relief as he saw Tubbo's sooty face staring down at him. He was alive, at least.

"Hey boss man," Tubbo said with a woozy grin and dropped down into the house, landing halfway on Technoblade, who caught him with ease. If one was to look hard enough, it might even look like, that for just a moment, Technoblade had pulled Tubbo into a tight hug. But that definitely wasn't what Technoblade was doing. Just catching Tubbo before he broke something. Stop Awwing Chat. He released Tubbo back to the floor, and the teen swayed dangerously "You're back!"

"I am," Technoblade said, even as he steadied the teen with hands that were still crusted in dried blood. "Are you alright? What happened here?"

"Bastards tried to kill me," Tubbo said, looking mildly annoyed at best, which was not the proper reaction to almost bein' killed-"So, after I got your message, I rigged some shit up. That took care of most of them. And I didn't even burn down the house!"

He had started a forest fire, but technically, he wasn't wrong. Technoblade was too busy trying to make sure Tubbo wasn't going to die immediately on him to even argue.

"Most of them," Technoblade repeated, still searching Tubbo for any sign of injuries. Tubbo was wearing his armor and it looked fine, which eased the tension in his chest further. "Are you hurt?"

"Nah." Tubbo said, waving a hand " Even if I had to fight off one guy since he was trying to, you know, stab me."

Tubbo made a motion that was probably supposed to mimic stabbing but really looked more like he was just flailing. "But he didn't get me. Are you worried about me, Technoblade?"

"I thought you'd been killed "Technoblade snapped, "And it seems that you were pretty close. I think you've also inhaled way too much smoke."

"Eh, probably," Tubbo agreed. "But not as much as the guy I lit on fire."

"What?" Technoblade said, "You lit someone on *fire* ?"

"Yeah! And kicked him off the roof!" Tubbo said, then frowned as if something was just occurring to him. "Did I... did I kill him?"

Technoblade glanced toward the window, facing the back of the house. He hadn't seen any bodies in front, and sure enough, a corpse was still... smoldering just outside the window. Technoblade placed himself between Tubbo and the view.

"Nah, he's probably just sleepin'," Techoblade said "just, uh, taking a nice long nap. Like you need. You look exhausted."

"I am a bit tired," Tubbo agreed, leaning against Technoblade sleepily. Shit, how much smoke had the kid inhaled? As soon as they got away from this place before everything went up, Technoblade was giving him a healing pot.

"Yeah, I know," Technoblade said, ignoring the way his own eyes ached with exhaustion. He was nearing twenty-four hours awake, but he really didn't have time to sleep, not yet. "Think you can walk?"

"I'm tired, not legless." Tubbo snorted, though he stumbled on the next step and it was only Technoblade's hand on his arm that kept him from falling completely.

"Of course. Technoblade agreed, too tired and relieved to even argue. "C'mon, let's go, before the house actually burns down."

Awww

Technosoft

"They're here!"

Technoblade, who'd been skimming a book about anomalies and glitches in code, looked up, but by the time he put his book down, Tubbo was already out the front door. Technoblade shook his head and followed behind.

"TUBBO!" Tommy bellowed, taking off at a dead run toward his best friend.

They crashed together, and if it was a scene from a play, they might have been graceful, but instead, they fell in a tangle of limbs that almost immediately seemed to turn into a scuffle.

Technoblade snorted in amusement as he watched them and Philz came to stand beside him on the porch.

"I think they might've missed each other," Phil observed with a wry grin.

"All Tubbo did was complain about how much he missed Tommy," Technoblade grumbled. "It was annoyin'. I mean you guys weren't gone that long."

Philza clapped a hand on Technoblade's shoulder and smiled warmly. "I missed you too mate."

Technoblade just shook his head. "How'd it go?"

Phil's eyes lit up "We got it Tech. We got the book."

Technoblade had been almost certain they had, or Tommy and Phil wouldn't have been in such high spirits. "That's great." he watched as Tommy and Tubbo, done scuffling, were laying in the dirt beside one another, laughing at something. "How's Tommy?"

Phil's smile fell a bit. "Tommy... he and I came to a bit of an understanding. You were right mate. We needed to talk. Things aren't fixed but..."

That was enough for Technoblade to nod in understanding. Progress. They'd made progress. "Well, at least it's something."

"We met someone from his past. Or his future. Fuck." Phil said, rubbing his eyes "You know what I mean. She didn't know him, yet obviously but... he was happy to see her Tech. Happier than he was to see either of us."

"Phil, you can't blame yourself for that," Technoblade said quietly, even though he felt a small curl of guilt. He knew some of it, some of why Tommy hated him, but he couldn't help but feel there was more. Tommy still wasn't telling them everything and Technoblade wasn't sure he ever would. "You aren't... you aren't that Phil."

"I could've been," Phil said, quietly and a little helplessly. Technoblade hated that tone. He didn't know what he was supposed to say to it. Phil was the strong one. The one with the answers. He had been Techno's entire life. "I was going to be him until Tommy came along and..."

Technoblade didn't know what to say to that.

Thankfully he was saved from a painfully emotional response, but Tubbo screeched, vaguely inhuman. Technoblade's heart didn't miss a beat, but it certainly sped up and he had his sword half-drawn before he realized there weren't any attackers, just Tubbo, red in the face and glaring.

"HORN?" he shouted at Tommy who looked a bit like a startled deer. "I'M GROWING FUCKING HORNS?"

"What's going on?" Phil called from beside Technoblade. He looked far less startled than Technoblade, which, he supposed made sense, considering the amount

Tommy at least had the good sense to look sheepish as he rubbed the back of his neck, a mannerism that reminded Technoblade starkly of Wilbur. "Tubbo was complaining" about his head hurting like knives stabbing out, or some shit. I told him it was probably just his horns growing in and I guess I forgot we didn't know about any of his hybrid shit the first time around."

"Tubbo's a hybrid?" Technoblade repeated, staring down at Tubbo who seemed just as shocked as the rest of them.

“Yeah,” Tommy said, then scowled. “Sheep or some shit. He’s going to get horns and his ears will get all floppy.”

... at least Tubbo’s headaches were explained? There really wasn’t ever a moment of peace, was there? Tubbo, a sheep hybrid. That actually made sense, now that Technoblade thought about it.

“Wait, so does that mean Tommy will be the only human in our group?” Tubbo piped up after a moment, existential crisis apparently put on hold for that observation

Tommy gasped like he’d been personally offended and Technoblade couldn’t help but laugh.

“L,” he said with a chuckle and Tommy threw him such a dirty look, everyone else couldn’t help but dissolve into laughter too.

“Fuck you.” Tommy snapped “Fuck you all.”

Things were not alright. Technoblade would be an idiot to think that everything was magically fixed because they got the book, or because Heza was dead, and because they had at least a partial lead on Wilbur, but... Technoblade had to admit he wasn’t totally regretting being here with his family the others.

Things were looking... if not up, they at least weren’t looking down.

Technosoft.

Chat, please, he wasn’t *soft* .

Chapter End Notes

1) Heyyyyyyyyy two chapter over 8k this week? Who am I even? This is a treat because we hit 100k hits and the muses decided to be nice. Also,, why have so many of you read this? Why? This has more hits than people in my hometown. wtf guys. I appreciate it but,,, wild.

2) TUBBO POV BABY, not much emotional, but he had fun, right? Heza is dead, crab rave.

3) this pretty much completely wraps up the book arc, which is nice since it’s chapter 30.

4) I technically uploaded this at work on my phone, so apologies of the formatting is off. I’ll fix it soon if it is. It looks ok to me but eh.

5) hey, guys. want a say in the new fic I start? Vote on your favorite idea [here](https://forms.gle/nf52EZGwp6DRaZws6) or using this link!! <https://forms.gle/nf52EZGwp6DRaZws6>

6) be kind, drink water, I love you. you all are amazing. see ya soon!

sittin pretty in the prime of life

Chapter Summary

Tommy reflects

Technoblade also reflects and has a surprise for everyone

Chapter Notes

TW: mentions of starvation, then the usual thoughts from Tommy.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy thought that Tubbo took the news about his horns pretty well, considering that Tommy did kinda spring it on him out of the fucking blue. The first time around, they'd had no clue what was happening, until Tubbo woke up with a bleeding head, right after they'd split with Wilbur and Tommy had nearly lost his first life there, from a fucking heart attack.

People said that Tommy was the troublemaker, but Tubbo was going to send him into an early grave. Fcuk he sounded old. Like Wilbur or Philza. Fucking hell, never mind. Tubbo was an angel, despite the literal horns.

Anyway, at least this time Tommy was prepared for blood and the weirder shit that would come in later. It had come in strongly during Schlatt's presidency, which obviously wasn't Tubbo's fucking fault, but it wasn't exactly great for Wilbur to see their spy start growing curling horns just like Schlatt. The slightly floppy ears were weird though and he was glad that there would be time to ease Tubbo into that.

Unlike with the horns.

He rolled over in the bed he was sharing with Tubbo, whose elbow was digging slightly uncomfortable into his side, but Tommy had slept in far worse places, so he didn't mind much. It hadn't been exactly the best way to break the news, he acknowledged that even he could've been a little gentler, but, in his defense, keeping the future shit separated was hard.

Sure it was easy to remember this big shit, like wars and betrayals, and enderdamned deaths, but his brain is a bit full of all his brilliant plans and memories, and just all-around big man shit, so excuse him that he forgot no one knew Tubbo was a hybrid yet.

He thought they knew!

Tommy suppressed a sigh and threw an arm over his eyes. It was dark in the room he was sharing with Tubbo and down the hall, he could hear Technoblade's soft snores from the couch, that he'd nearly fought Phil over who had to sleep on it. Technoblade had won, but probably only because Phil had slept hardly any the nights before. Tommy pretended not to notice, but Phil often only pretended to sleep, and when he thought Tommy was sleeping, he'd be up, sitting just outside the tent.

Tommy had woken the last night they were on the server covered in a cold sweat from a nightmare that had already faded to find Phil already awake, sitting beside him gently rubbing Tommy's back as he gasped for air.

Tommy hadn't wanted his fucking pity, but he couldn't deny that it was comforting, and he'd allowed himself a few moments of pity, really only because he was panting too hard to tell Phil to fuck off, before stomping outside to sit by the fire until daybreak.

Phil hadn't followed him until the sun was peeking up over the far horizon. They'd been...less tense, though, after they got the book. It was kind of irrational to not want Phil to have it, but Tommy didn't really care. As long as the book was his, he could control his own fucking future. No one could leverage it against him.

"Shut up," Tubbo grumbled quietly and dug his elbow in deeper for a moment and Tommy coughed from the force. Fuck Tubbo had his shitty, pointy elbows. "You're thinking too fucking loud."

"You're sleeping." Tommy whispered yelled back "How the fuck do you know what I'm doing! I'm just laying here!"

"Shh. Too loud." Tubbo chastised, not even bothering to crack an eye open. "You're doing your breath thing you do when you're worked up. And you won't lay still. Please just go the fuck to sleep."

"Thanks." Tommy snarked. If simply going to sleep was an option he'd have already jumped right on it. Besides, he was a Big Man, and missing a little sleep wouldn't hurt him.

But Tommy was tired, and Tubbo was warm, and the house was quiet, blocking out the sounds of any mobs outside, and the book was safe in his inventory.... Tommy felt his eyes slip close.

--

When he cracked his eyes open, somehow, Tubbo's feet were shoved in his feet. "Hey, what the fuck!" he exclaimed, shoving them off, not caring if he woke Tubbo up. He shoved down the vestiges of his dream. He wasn't sure it had exactly been a nightmare from what little he could, but he could still taste saltwater and feel sand roughly against his skin, so it wasn't exactly something he wanted to linger on. He needed to be up anyway. Needed to be doing something.

Tubbo just muttered something intelligible and flipped him the bird, as he curled his feet up to him. Tommy frowned. When had Tubbo gotten that scab on his ankle? Whatever, Tubbo,

for all he pretended, was just as accident prone as Tommy.

Sunlight was coming in through the window, but it wasn't yet seven-thirty if Tommy had to guess as he opened the door into the main house. Technoblade had to be awake since Tommy couldn't hear the snoring, but he doubted Phil was awake yet since the house seemed to be pretty much quiet. Techno was probably out then, doing whatever the fuck it was he did on a regular basis.

Even in the future and after months of living together in the past (present? Fucking time travel) Tommy still didn't know what the fuck Technoblade did half the time. The guy was an enigma and a half, and Tommy really wasn't sure he always wanted to know.

The guy had a sword named orphan obliterator for ender's sake!

However, he was proven wrong about Techno being out when he padded into the kitchen in search of something to eat and found Technoblade sitting at the kitchen table, dressed in casual clothes (that was still an odd sight for Tommy. Techno had started wearing them a little more, but it felt like he was seeing techno naked or something equally fucked up. It just felt *wrong* to see the Blade so casual).

"Mornin' Tommy," Technoblade said, not even sparing a glance up from the book he was engrossed in. The house that Techno had rented had a bookshelf full of books. Tommy hadn't bothered with them, but honestly, he wouldn't be surprised if that wasn't like seventy percent of the reason Techno chose the house. The rest of the reasons were probably based on like, price, and how easily defensible it was.

"Morning, Techno." Tommy mumbled as he shuffled toward the cabinet "why the fuck are you up so early?"

"I could ask the same of you." Technoblade retorted, looking up to pin Tommy with a flat gaze. "You going to rummage through the kitchen like a raccoon? We can eat once everyone gets up."

"I'm hungry now, bitch,," Tommy snapped. "And unlike some people, I'm a big man. A snack now won't ruin my appetite later. Ender, man, you're worse than Phil about nagging, big T."

"Keep your voice down. Phil and Tubbo are sleepin'" Technoblade admonished quietly and Tommy did the very mature thing and flipped him off. He'd be as damn loud as he pleased, bitch boy.

The fact that Tommy did speak more quietly a moment later had absolutely nothing to do with what Techno said, fuck you.

"Whatever." Tommy said, collapsing into a chair with only a regular apple for his troubles. Technoblade sighed but didn't say anything as Tommy munched loudly on the apple.

"Can you stop that?" Technoblade asked after a few moments.

Tommy bit back a grin, and gave Techno his most innocent look "Stop what?"

He took another very loud bite of his apple, crushing on it, as he started Techno down.

“That,” Techno growled lowly.

“What? I’m just eating, big man. Ever heard of it?” Tommy took another, louder, even more, obnoxious bite and chewed it with his mouth wide open. He was almost certain that he saw Techno’s eye twitch.

“Chew with your mouth closed!” Technoblade snapped “What, were you raised in a barn?”

No, but had lived in a cave system for a while. “I have no idea what you’re talking about Technoblade,” he said loftily.

Tommy was across the table, and just out of striking distance, so he allowed himself to smirk. Besides, he’d gotten far better at reading Technoblade’s moods, both from the days in the arctic and the last couple of months. This was more along the irritation anger lines, not the ‘I’m going to start stabbing shit’ anger.

That didn’t stop Tommy from flinching when Technoblade slammed his book down on the table. He looked back up in time to see what he thought might be the briefest moments of guilt or regret on Techno’s face before he was scowling again. “I’m gonna take that apple from you if you don’t start eatin’ like a normal person Tommy.”

Tommy scowled and tucked the half-eaten apple against his chest. “I’d like to see you try bitch.”

He knew it was fine. Technoblade might take the apple from him, but he wouldn’t- Tommy wasn’t- fuck he wasn’t going to be starved. He’d still get breakfast. It was just an apple. It was just an apple-

His heart still jumped into high gear, and a familiar tightness settled into his chest. Fuck. He was fine, this was bullshit. Technoblade was saying something, but Tommy wasn’t really listening.

“Fuck you, this is my apple.” Tommy spat back, cutting Technoblade off. “I’ll eat it however I want.”

“I’m going to-”

“Boys”

Tommy and Technoblade both turned abruptly to find Phil standing at the edge of the kitchen. He was tired, but a small smile played at his lips. “What the fuck are the two of you yelling about?”

If Tommy didn’t know better he’d say that the tips of Technoblade’s ears, visible only because his long pink hair was pulled back into a messy bun, turned a shade or bright red. WAS Techno blushing?

“Tommy was bein’ annoyin’,” Technoblade grumbled.

“Is that true Toms?” Phil asked, and there was clear amusement in his voice.

“I was just eating my apple when this bitch started threatening to take my food,” Tommy whined. “I don’t know what his fucking problem is.”

Technoblade glared. “Tech, why the fuck would you take his food? Phil asked and Tommy knew it was a bit. It was a joke. Techno wasn’t really trying to take his food, and Phil wasn’t really defending him. He knew that if it was real, Phil would probably help Technoblade take Tommy’s shit, but...

But he could play along with the bit. It was funny.

“Yeah, *Tech*,” Tommy taunted. “Why?”

“It’s really not very nice of you mate.” Phil admonished, unable to hide his growing grin as he stepped fully into the kitchen. “Stealing people’s food while they’re eating it.”

“He chews like a heathen Phil!” Technoblade protested, gesturing at Tommy. “I have sensitive ears!”

“I am eating entirely normally,” Tommy interjected. “It’s how I always eat. You’re just being a little bitch.”

To prove his point Tommy took a normal-sized bite of his apple and began chewing normally. He even waited until he swallowed to say “See?”

“Techno, mate, there’s nothing wrong with how Tommy’s eating. Do you need to go back to bed?” Phil asked in faux concern, stepping forward to lay a hand on Technoblade’s shoulder.

“You’re the worst.” Technoblade snapped, looking at Tommy. Tommy swallowed back the instinctual pang of fear and guilt in favor of gasping in mock offense.

“*Phlllllll*!” He whined, “He’s bullying me.”

Phil wasn’t even trying to hide his laughter now “Techno, mate. C’mon now, that’s not very nice. Apologize to your br- ”

Phil choked on his words, as Technoblade’s eyes blew wide, and Tommy froze, glancing between them rapidly, while what Phil had almost said sunk in/

“Would you all shut the fuck up?” Tommy nearly jumped out of his skin as Tubbo barreled into the kitchen, shattering up the tension between the three of them “Why are you all so enderdamned *loud* .”

“Tubbo!” Phil said enthusiastically- perhaps a bit too enthusiastically if you asked Tommy- as he clapped his hands together. “You’re up! Excellent. We can make breakfast now!” A

Technoblade’s normally passive face looked like he had just bitten into a fucking lemon, peel and all. He stood up abruptly. “Yeah. I’m going uh, to, uh get some stuff.” Technoblade muttered and was out the door before anyone could protest.

Ah good old-fashioned ignoring your issue. Tommy didn't agree with Technoblade and Phil often, but he could wholeheartedly get behind *that* .

"Want to help Tommy?" Tubbo asked.

Tommy rolled his eyes. If no one else was going to talk about it, he certainly wasn't going to. "Fuck yeah, I'm starving. This apple tasted like shit anyway. I need real food, like a big man."

—

Technoblade came back from outside less than five minutes later because he wasn't even dressed, and ignored all of them as he made a beeline for the back of the house where his extra clothes were kept.

He reemerged just as Tommy finished slicing the bread (Phil hadn't trusted him or Tubbo on a hot stove, but apparently a knife was entirely fair game).

Since they were in an actual house, with an actual kitchen, they could have real food. Small strips of fork, fried to perfection, perfectly toasted bread with butter and honey dripping from it, and eggs with bigs of vegetables and even a little cheese sprinkled on top. It looked fucking delicious. Tommy hadn't had a breakfast this good since before they left home, (it wasn't really home, not without Wilbur, but Tommy didn't know what else to call it-) and before that, fuck if he knows when. Even when he was living with Technoblade, Techno mostly let him fend for himself in the mornings.

"Shit." Tommy cursed when the knife slipped and nearly clipped his finger.

"Careful mate." Phil called from across the room "Don't cut off a finger."

"Wasn't the fucking plan." He grumbled, bristling just a little. He did clear his thoughts of the past (or was it the future?) and focused on slicing the bread. Losing a finger to a fucking kitchen knife would be *very* unpog.

"So, we didn't get into it yesterday, since we were all so tired, but what did you and Tubbo get up to while we were gone?" Phil asked, taking a bite of his eggs.

Technoblade cleared his throat. "Oh, not much. We just, uh,-"

"We asked around about Wilbur." Tubbo cut in, through a mouthful of honey-covered bread "Techno found out some shit, right?"

Techno was glad Tubbo remembered their cover. He had too, of course, but having both of them say the same thing would be more believable. Techno knew that Phil wouldn't hurt him, but he'd be disappointed in him. That was far worse.

Techno felt a little guilty about lying. He wasn't much for lies- he just told people what he thought and could pretty reliably take them in a fight if they didn't like it. That tactic wasn't gonna fly here.

"You know where Wilbur is?" Tommy asked, shooting up out of his seat "And you haven't fucking told me-"

"We don't know where he is." Technoblade interrupted, and Tommy's face twisted into a frown. He pretended not to notice the hope shining in both Tommy and Phil's eyes and the uncomfortable twist in his gut. He wasn't sure what was the truth in the information Heza had given him if any of it. It is bare-bones, but... she'd been in a lot of pain and was desperate to stop him. He was almost certain that she had at least put eyes on Wilbur. He hoped he was right.

He had to be right.

"What did you hear mate?" Phil asked, voice deceptively calm. The death grip he had on his fork gave away how tense he really was.

"Not much, t' be honest," Techno said, dipping his head slightly. "Someone ad met up with a man matchin' his description and the same name on a different server. Said he was travelin' with a group of others and was doin' some server hopping. They had no idea where he was goin' through, and it had been weeks."

"But he seemed fine?" Tommy pressed, and even Techno could read the look in Tommy's eyes. Tommy couldn't quite mask the desperation in his voice either, despite his best efforts "That bitch is prone to bad luck."

"They didn't really say." Technoblade admitted. Tommy's shoulders slumped and Phil's face fell.

"I see. He is probably fine though." Phil said, finally, "I mean, Wilbur is far from incapable and based on what we know, his timeline is the least changed, right Tommy?"

Tommy was now picking at the remaining eggs on his plate angrily "Yeah, I suppose." Tommy agreed "fucker was fine until after we joined the SMP."

"That's good," Tubbo said "And I'm sure Wilbur is fine."

"Yeah." Philza agreed with a forced smile, and Technoblade could tell none of them were completely convinced. Himself included.

Silence fell back over the table and Technoblade shifted awkwardly in his seat. He was worried about Wilbur, especially if he had no idea if his information was true. For all he knew, Wilbur could be dead in a ditch somewhere and it's be his fault that Phil and the others thought he was fine.

Technoblade took a bite of his bread, but it tasted like ash, despite the honey on it.

“We need to go to Hypixel.” Tommy said suddenly, breaking the tense silence “That’s where we go next.”

“Pog!” Tubbo exclaimed around a mouthful of eggs. “What about Wilbur though?”

“Chew or you’ll choke.” Phil admonished “And yeah, Tommy I thought you’d want to look for Wilbur, while we translated the book?”

Tommy huffed “Of course I want to look for Wilbur, dickhead. But obviously, he doesn’t want to be found, and you were right about his timeline being somewhat unaffected. I know he was in Hypixel for a while, the first time around. We can wait him out there and then also make a name in Bedwars and shit. That’s how Tubbo and I got invited the first time around.”

“That... actually makes a lot of sense.” Technoblade agreed.

“Hey, fuck you!” Tommy protested, “I have good ideas all the fucking time!”

“Sure you do.” Technoblade teased, ignoring the cool tendrils of guilt that settled firmly in his gut. Lying was the best option here. Besides, Wilbur was fine, and would only be mad if he found out Techno was even slightly worried about him.

He grinned as Tommy launched into a rant about how great his ideas were, and the tension leaked from the table

Honestly, the entire conversation had gone far better than he anticipated.

They didn’t waste much time, which Technoblade appreciated. Packing up was pretty easy considering they’d packed pretty light, to begin with, and had lost some items here and there along the way.

So by lunch, they were on the road to Hypixel. It wasn't fair, and the roads that led to it were some of the best kept since it was one of the most popular servers in existence. Thousands of people lived there, running shops, tournaments, and more stayed as competitors and tourists, taking in the sights. It was terraformed to the point that it was nearly impossible to tell what biomes had once been in place, and Technoblade had traveled for three days straight once and was still in the throngs of the cities, no natural landforms insight. It was strange.

Technoblade was... he wasn’t exactly sure how he felt about going back to Hypixel. He’d gone there at eighteen, and decimated in the PVP tournaments for a couple of years, before moving to Skyblocke.

It wasn’t necessarily a bad time, he’d enjoyed the fights, satiated the voices' need for violence, and... well he hadn’t done badly for himself financially either.

But, it hadn’t been great either. It was loud, crowded, and once he’d made a name for himself, everyone had wanted a piece of him. They’d wanted an autograph, or a duel, or a fight, and some of them had even tried to hire him. Technoblade had only taken one of those jobs before his abrupt and sudden retirement from the tournaments.

He'd gone home back to Phil's for just one night after that, not bothering to get his things from Hypixel.

Then he'd farmed potatoes.

He'd farmed potatoes because it was easy. It was a *competition*. It couldn't bite back the voices, but they stayed quiet for longer than normal, offering only tips on how to grow them, other than the faithful few who only ever and always chanted blood. Practice dummies and mobs were enough for him, for that time. He'd only just considered getting back out there, on Hypixel or some other server when he'd gotten that frantic message from Phil, begging him to come home.

Since then things had been too strange. Life has turned upside down and Technoblade... he wasn't sure he wanted to go back to the farm, let alone back to Hypixel with his entire fam- Technoblade sighed as Chat exploded again.

Technosoft?

Technobro?

SBI!!

¾ pog!!! family

Technobro

Family Dynamic confirmed?

Dadza!

Technobro.

BrotherInnit!

Tubbro!

Phil's near-miss comment earlier hadn't fooled any of them, and it had apparently wormed its way into his brain.

Tommy, Tubbo, and Wilbur weren't his brothers and Phil wasn't his dad. They *weren't*. Tommy certainly agreed and though a small part of Technoblade hated to agree with Tommy on anything, at least Tommy saw reason for once.

Technoblade couldn't be part of the family. He... he hadn't been around. Phil was one of the most important people in the world to Technoblade and Techno would not hesitate to admit that he'd walk to the ends of any server for him, but... Technoblade wasn't his son. As Much as Phil wanted him to be, had assured him that Technoblade could always be Wilbur's twin, it wasn't. Technoblade wasn't like them.

Wilbur was a prick, but Technoblade knew he was right. He wasn't really part of the family. He was the reason that Phil couldn't be with his actual sons, Tommy and Wilbur. He wasn't Wilbur's brother- he'd done nothing but hurt them, be a threat to them, for years.

"Mate, we're almost there," Phil said, jolting Technoblade out of that particular train of thought. Which. Lane. Wilbur was the emo one. He hadn't indulged that heavily in those thoughts for a long time.

"Sorry. "Techno said, "I was just thinkin'," Technoblade murmured.

Phil snorted "Hey, don't hurt yourself."

"Hilarious." Techno deadpanned, rolling his eyes.

"I thought it was funny." Tubbo chimed in, with innocent eyes Technoblade knew were just a front for the monster underneath. "Philza is funnier than you, Blade."

Technoblade should've left him in that burning house.

"Nah." Tommy said, "Neither of them are funny. I'm the funniest one here, obviously. C'mon Tubs, keep up."

Tubbo and Tommy settled into bicker and Technoblade was thankful, because he really wasn't sure he had the energy for another round of bickering after the eventful morning and spending all afternoon on the road. At least Hypixel was close, so they wouldn't have to stop overnight.

"We'll need to find a place to stay once we get there," Phil said quietly. In the distance, Technoblade could just make out the port. It was a bit ostentatious, though that was to be expected, since it was so high traffic. It had been expanded- something very costly and admittedly dangerous to do, but with the sheer traffic, it had been ultimately necessary. "It'll cost an arm and a leg since we didn't do it in advance. WE can afford it, but, I hate those fucking price gougers."

Technoblade allowed himself a small grin. "Nah, I know somewhere we can stay, free of charge."

"Really?" Phil asked, "what sort of connections you got mate?"

"Phil, I lived on Hypixel for a while. I have a house here. It's not much, but it's already paid for, so no one should be living there." Technoblade explained, "We can stay there tonight."

"Lead the way then, mate," Phil said with an enthusiastic grin.

When they got to Hypixel, it was easy to get in. It was an odd time, so there wasn't even a line. Even if there had been, Technoblade's status alone from the tournaments would've been enough to let them bypass them.

Despite the easy entrance and the late hours, when they stepped out, the sprawling metropolis of Hypixel was still buzzing with energy.

Technoblade kind of hated it. He was tired and there were too many people there. He had his mask on, for the sole reason of not wanting people to see his actual face but that somehow made him more recognizable. No one would be looking for him- it had been almost a year and a half since he'd stepped foot on the server, but it still made him a little uncomfortable.

"C'mon, this way," he said gruffly, taking off in the direction of his house with purposeful strides. Techno might not have been there in a while, and while several shops had changed and houses appeared to have been rebuilt entirely, Techno still knew the way to his own house, thanks, and Chat was murmuring with excitement, providing directions he really didn't need.

"Slow down, Big Man!" Tommy called from behind him, as Technoblade turned sharply down another street, leading them into the heart of Hypixel. "Tubbo's too short to keep up- oh!"

Technoblade glanced over his shoulder to see Tommy doubled over, clutching his stomach, while Tubbo glared at him, elbow still slightly raised. Phil was just cackling.

Technoblade rolled his eyes. "You deserved that one." Techno said. "But just hurry up, we're almost there and I don't have time for your lollygaggin'"

"Lollygagging." he heard Tommy mutter, as he straightened up "Who the fuck says lollygagging?"

"Lollygagging." Tubbo repeated, testing out the syllables "what a funny word."

Great. Now Tubbo had a new world to annoy him with It might be better than using his name against him though.

He ignored the annoying pair and turned back around. If they got lost because they couldn't keep up, then that was their problem. He wouldn't come back for them.

....that lie didn't even sound believable to himself, anymore.

But, Tommy and Tubbo weren't stupid, and they had Phil with them, so he really wasn't that worried about them keeping up. The further they got from the port, the less the streets were crowded. Night was falling, but Hypixel never had any mobs- too many people and too much light everywhere, all the time. Besides, Hypixel had six admins, and dozens of admin-bloods to help keep things running smoothly.

It wouldn't surprise Technoblade if they had somehow managed to find a way to ensure that mobs couldn't spawn at all, because much like the modded server, you couldn't die on Hypixel. Once, it had only been in the tournament pits that they'd managed to bypass the death part of the respawn process, as well as debilitating injury. It was insane to think about and Technoblade couldn't understand half of it, let alone how they had managed to expand it out to the entire server, once illegal fights became an issue.

Of course, it wasn't everything. Death was only completely bypassed in the pits. Outside of it, you weren't going to get murdered, but unfortunately illness and fall damage could still kill you. It was somehow only death by weapons, or fists that seemed to be bypassed.

You could still die on Hypixel, but it was very, very unlikely.

As they drew closer to his house, the houses got a bit larger than those and the number of shops and tourist destinations became fewer. Techno's house was nestled in a neighborhood of people who lived on Hypixel all or at least a majority of the time. He no longer did, of course, but had at a time.

Finally, just as the last bits of daylight leached from the sky, and the lanterns on the streets began to flicker to life, Technoblade came to a stop. "Here we are." He said, turning to face the others. "It isn't much but-

"This isn't much my ass!" Tommy exclaimed, staring behind Technoblade in wonder "Holy fucking shit Techno, that house is huge!"

Technoblade grinned. His house was rather nice. It wasn't that big- only three bedrooms, a kitchen, a living room, a study,- okay maybe his house was a little larger than he'd alluded to. Oops. He honestly hadn't spent much time there, even when he lived on Hypixel, preferring to find one of the private training areas and beat dummies until they were dead.

"Yeah mate, when you said you had a house, this isn't what I envisioned," Phil said, and even he sounded impressed. Technoblade rubbed the back of his neck, both pleased and a little embarrassed. He'd known his house was nice, but to see Phil and the others so excited, well, not that Technoblade cared what they thought or anything but-

"Well, I didn't build it," he admitted as he let them through the front gate. "I bought it like this."

"Still, holy fuck." Phil said as he ushered the two somewhat awed teens through the gate.

"You've been holding out on us Techno." Tubbo said, "We've been camping and you had a whole mansion!"

"This isn't a mansion." Technoblade corrected "Far from it. It's just a nice house. It's the average for the area- most of these people were competitors, so you don't really have to worry about too many tourists getting back here."

"This house is still fucking huge," Tommy said, bounding right up behind Technoblade, who was unlocking the front door. He'd gotten his keycard out of the enderchest before he left the other server, so the door swung open and Tommy and Tubbo practically bolted past him into the house, shouting something about a race that made him cringe slightly.

"Don't break anything" Techno called behind them. That was probably more likely to make them break something though.

‘Good luck with that one.’ Phil said fondly, placing a hand on Techno’s shoulder. “Those two are like an enderdamned hurricane.”

“I know,” Technoblade muttered. “That’s why I’m hoping all my weapons are put away.”

Phil snorted. Technoblade wasn't sure if Phil knew that he wasn't actually joking. He'd packed in a bit of a hurry.

“The kitchen isn’t stocked,” Technoblade said a bit apologetically as he closed the door behind Phil. He relaxed slightly, now that he was in the walls of his own home. No strange eyes on him, no one was going to walk up to him in the street. He discarded his mask on a table by the door just for that purpose. His crown and cape quickly followed “We’ll have to go out to one of the stores in the mornin’. Once they know I’m back we can probably get groceries delivered again.”

Technoblade had loved that one amenity of living in the Champion Villages. He didn’t have to go to the store. He didn’t mind gathering his own supplies, but he hated payin’ for them and he hated the sheer amount of niceties he was forced to make on those trips.

“Fuck Tech, you’re living the high life.” Phil teased as he slipped off his own cloak and threw it on the same hook as Techno’s since there was only one of the wall. Techno made a not to take care of that. “Gettin’ shit delivered. I knew you’d done well for yourself but-”

“Hypixel gold coin doesn’t transfer out,” Technoblade explained. “I won.... Lots of tournaments. Made lots of gold. I’ve got most of it in a safe under the house.”

“So you’re rich?” Phil questioned.

“Eh.” Techno blade said “Maybe. I don’ really care though. It just makes things easier.”

“That is does.” Phil agreed as he took in the room around him. Techno found himself inexplicably nervous.

Something thumped upstairs and Technoblade cringed. He hoped that wasn’t something important. Or a person breaking something.

“They sound like they’re having fun,” Phil said with a laugh. “Now, come on. We may not have food, but I have the stuff for tea. Let’s have a cup while the boys are exploring. We need to talk about Tommy’s book anyway.”

Chapter End Notes

- 1) Sorry this is both late and a little short. I wanted to include the conversation but the chapter would've been minimum 8k and yall would have been luck to get it next week lol
- 2) Alien AU won and chapter 1 is up! it is titled 'very normal human behavior'. Just

click on my username and you should find it!

3) This chapter ended up being relatively fluffy. There was supposed to be more plot, but Techno and Tommy decided to act like siblings. They got to hypixel though, and I'm very excited for what is going to happen in the Hypixel arc.

4) That's it! I'm very tired, so good night. I love you all, drink water, be kind, and have a wonderful evening. <3

the stairs creak as you sleep

Chapter Summary

more technosoft propaganda because I forgot how to write plot.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Phil made tea to settle his nerves. It wasn't so much the tea itself. Phil didn't really put all that much stock in the herbal properties that some people swore by, but the motions themselves were familiar.

The act of making tea was something that Phil had been doing since he was a child, hands guided by his parents before he ever left the nest, and a process he'd never quite abandoned, even during the days of his life he didn't care much to reflect on. Even in the shiteest time, Phil knew how to make tea. His hands were steady as he poured the tea into two mugs, one for himself and one for Techno.

Techno didn't like tea- never had- but Phil also believed that something about holding a warm drink was soothing for the soul, so whether or not Technodrank it, Phil didn't care. They could at least both sit there and hold it. If Technoblade's cabinets hadn't been entirely bare, he might've made him coffee, but it was obvious that Technoblade had not been in the house in a very long time.

The house. Phil was both surprised and complet unsurprised by the house that Technoblade owned. Of course, he'd know that Technoblade, logically, had to live somewhere while he'd been competing on Hypixel- it only made sense, especially when he was competing full time. But, of all the times that Phil had come to see Techno compete (see Technoblade *win* , usually) Phil normall paid for his own room at a hotel. He wanted to surprise Technoand Technonever offered to show him where he lived, even if Phil stayed a day or two.

Phil hadn't really minded- nothing on Hypixel could really be that person- but he really hadn't imagined that Technoblade would have a house like *this* .

It had to have cost a pretty fucking penny, especailly sicne the economy on Hypixel was entirely based off of diamonds and Hypixel gold- the coins that the competitors used. You could exchange gold ingots for them too, as a tourist but the exchange rate was shit, and it was far easier to win them by just competing, even if you lost.

Techno rarely ever lost, but still. A house this size, in the heart of Hypixel, not to mention whatever modifications Techno was sure to have paid for... Technoblade had done even

better in tournaments that Phil thought to be able to afford a house so big. It almost worried him- how often had he competed to earn this much money?

But then again, his eldest had never done anything halfway- he was all in or all out, no fucking around.

As Phil stirred a bit of sugar into his own tea he couldn't help but grin. Shit, that was all his kids, wasn't it? He supposed that he might have a guess where they got it from. He felt marginally more settled as he carried the two mugs of tea back to the table where Techno was sitting. A rag sat on the edge of the table and it looked like tEchno had just wiped a thick layer of dust off the table.

"Here you go," He said and slid the steaming mug across. Techno took it in one hand. hE didn't take a sip, but Phil didn't mind.

"Thanks," Technoblade murmured "Now, what did you want to talk to me about?"

Upstairs he could still hear Tommy and Tubbo's voices floating down the straits. They were arguing again, though it was their normal light-hearted bickering.

"Tommy has the translation book," Phil said "It will work, but he... seemed hesitant to allow me to touch it after we go it. We need to give him time, but I also think, based on what I did see in the book, it may take quite a bit of time to translate,"

"Okay," Technodrawled, squinting at Phil.

"I want you to talk to him," Phil said.

Techno stilled his fidgeting. "What?"

"Listen, tEchno, you seem to get thought o Tommy better than I can," Phil started, but Technocut him off.

"I thought you said you two were good," Techno argued quietly

"I said we made progress, mate," Phil corrected "Tommy still doesn't trust me,"

"He doesn't trust me either Phil," Technohissed. "Toom can barely stand me half the time!"

That was true. Tommy seemed to rapidly switch between being himself, or, at least who Phil knew Tommy as- a little clingy, carefree, and boisterous- to withdrawn, angry, and defensive for no reason at all.

"He still likes you better than me," Phil pointed out "He tells you things more. He'll be more likely to work with you, at least for now,"

"Fine. But I won't be so patient with him this time around," Technogrumbled " if the idiot doesn't want my help this time, he doesn't have to take it,"

"Thank you," is all Phil said. He didn't bother pointing out the empty threat.

"Sleep on the couch,"

"No,"

"Tubbo, you keep fucking elbowing me in my sleep and shit. It's disturbing.," Tommy groaned from where he'd finally collapsed on the carpet in one of TEchno's guest rooms. The house was huge- even though there were only three bedrooms, they were huge- nearly double the size of his back on Phil's server, and far bigger than any of the inns they had stayed in.

It was also far nicer than the hole he'd stated in Techno's house, that had really just been a n=hole he'd dug out that Techno had grudgingly spruced up for him so that it was more of a home than just a hole.

Then Tommy had thrown it all back in his face.

He couldn't quite regret it, not when he was right, at least mostly, but it was... he didn't like thinking about it.

"Okay, so you sleep on the couch," Tubbo countered. "Why do I have to sleep on the couch,"

"Because I'm a big man," Tommy argued. In the end they'd probably share the bed, like they did when there wasn't room for another. It was just an easy argument to have.

"Yeah, but I'm growing horns,"

"You're being humanphobic Tubbo," Tommy exclaimed, putting a hand over his heart "my own best friend, buying into that hybrid superiority bullshit

"Call it what you want, big man, I deserve the bed," Tubbo said lightly, not rising to his bait.

"Whatever. Fuck you," Tommy didn't pout. Big men didn't pout, that was for pussies. Instead, he just tiny his chin out defiantly.

"That doesn't mean you won the argument Tommy" Tubbo protested, flopping back so that his head hung off the end of the bed, staring at where Tommy was laying on the floor.

"Shut up yes it does," Tommy snapped "you're just a sore loser,"

Tubbo scoffed and Tommy kept waiting for further rebuttal but it never came. Tommy frowned and pushed himself into a sitting position.

"Tubbo, are you ok?" Tommy asked trying not to sound too concerned.

"Yeah? Why wouldn't I be?" Tubbo asked, but there was a strange note in his voice that Tommy couldn't place. It made him uncomfortable.

"I don't know. You seem off, and shit," Tommy said, shrugging.

Tubbo stuck his tongue out and sat up. "Nah I'm good. You're the weird one, future boy,"

"I'm not weird! I'm *wise*," Tommy exclaimed. "Tubbo, something I shouldn't expect *you* to understand,"

"Whatever you say, big man," Tubbo said, not bothering to stifle a laugh, "I think you're just a pussy--"

"Oifuck you--" Tommy snarled, lunging playfully for Tubbo.

—

Tommy wanted to go on record that while he didn't get worked up over stupid things like nightmares (seeing as he was far too big a man to still be having nightmares about shit that happened months ago) they were annoying as fuck.

Big men didn't need sleep, but it was nice to get through a full night without waking up all sweaty and shit, or ender forbid, crying.

He hadn't cried, thank ender, but he'd still woken up with trembling hands and a gasp. he didn't want to disturb Tubbo anymore than he probably already had, so Tommy had padded down the hall and out into the balcony, using a ledge to boost himself onto the roof.

That's where he'd been....for a while. He wasn't exactly sure how long it had been, but his hands only stopped shaking a few minutes ago. The dream itself wasn't *that* bad, just fucking annoying. It was Pogtopia again, and while the specifics had faded as soon as he woke up, Wilbur's slightly unhinged laughter still rang in his ears, and the feeling of fists on his face was enough for him to make the wild fucking guess he'd dreamed about the Pit. Again.

Whatever. That was old news. That hadn't even really fucking happened. It wouldn't happen, because Tommy would die long before Schlatt ever had the chance to order Tubbo's execution.

The fresh air had helped him pull his shit together. The roof of Techno's fancy house in Hypixel was a far cry from the dank walls of Pogtopia.

The stars were a little dim, with the bright lights of the street, but Tommy still tilted his head up at them, enjoying the light above and below. It was... wasn't exactly nice, but at least his heart rate wasn't in fucking heart attack range.

"Hey, Tommy,"

Fucking hell, he took it back. Tommy startled and nearly tumbled forward, managing to scramble back at the last second. He turned around to glare at Technoblade, who was looming behind him, on the pitch of the roof.

"What the fuck Technoblade, you're like a fucking cat. Make some noise or some shit," Tommy snapped. Technoblade shuffled his feet slightly and had the decency to look slightly sheepish. Or maybe he was just annoyed. it was a little hard to tell in the dim light, alright? Fucking expressionless bastard.

“What are you doing up here?” Technoblade asked instead of apologizing, coming to sit down beside Tommy. He was just out of arms to reach, which was probably smart because Tommy had been debating smacking him. There was emotion on his face, that if Tommy was an idiot, that could be confused with concern.

“Just getting some air. Couldn’t sleep with Tubbo elbowing me and shit,” Tommy lied, rather smoothly in his opinion.

“Oh,” Techno said, though he sounded unconvinced. And perhaps that was worry.

“Why, did you think there was another reason?” Tommy demanded, a little more defensively than necessary. What, had Technoblade sensed his nightmare? Had Phil sent him up here? Had Tubbo ratted on him about his nightmares? Fuck off he could handle a nightmare on his own.

“Tubbo told me you tried to jump before,” Technoblade said bluntly. Tommy gaped for a moment as his brain processed what Techno had said because that was the last thing he expected.

“Tubbo needs to fucking keep his mouth shut. That was ages ago, I’m fine now,” Tommy snapped, not caring about the venom in his words. Techno didn’t need to know every little secret. Fuck, Tommy wasn’t even sure why he’d told Tubbo that particular fact. Apparently, he shouldn’t have.

He scoffed “So I’m not going to fucking jump off your fancy house and scare the neighbors by going splat. Don’t worry about that. And don’t worry. I know that now I’ve got the book, you’ve fulfilled your promise and shit so I’ll get out of your hair soon as I’ve got enough money- “

Technoblade made a noise of protest, before cutting him off, holding up a hand “I’m not worried about money or the- the dang *neighbors* , Tommy, I’m worried about-“ Technoblade seemed to choke on his words for a moment “I wanted to talk to you about the translation book,”

Sly pivot there, but Tommy was too pissed to try and hunt down whatever stupid thought Techno made had cut off.

“What about it?” Tommy asked, crossing his arms.

“I want to help you translate it,” What? Technoblade had said he’d help Tommy but it had been months. *Months* . Technoblade had abandoned his own life because of Tommy, and while Tommy wasn’t necessarily ungrateful, he’d thought they were done.

I can’t believe how ungrateful you are. How selfish a little voice crooned and Tommy squashed it with as much fury as he could muster. It was quite a lot of fury, to be honest.

Techno hadn’t brought it up, but Tommy had assumed that Hypixel would probably be their parting of ways, sooner or later.

"I don't need your help, I'm a big fucking man and I can do this myself," Tommy snapped, because he could. He didn't need to owe Technoblade anymore. He'd managed to build something almost akin to brotherhood friendship with him, but if the book he had contained the wrong information it could destroy everything.

"But you don't have to, Tommy," Technoblade said plainly like he wasn't talking like a crazy man.

"Don't say that kind of shit," Tommy warned, hoping that he sounded more angry than desperate, because he could *feel* the enderdamned desperation clawing at the back of his throat. He wanted to trust him and that was dangerous enough.

"Why won't you let us help you with anything more than-" Technoblade started, sounding irritated enough that Tommy's jaw tightened in anticipation. Then, he sighed. He sounded normal (or as normal as techno ever sounded) when he spoke again. "Nevermind. My offer stands though,"

Tommy had no intention of unpacking any of that, at any fucking point so he just rolled his eyes.

"Whatever, bitch,"

Technoblade pinched the bridge of his nose.

"Go back to bed, before I push you off this roof myself,"

Tommy could tell he was joking, even with the deadpan delivery. Tommy must not have pissed him off too bad. That was a good days work, then.

"What about your neighbors?" Tommy taunted "What would they say"

Technoblade grinned, though perhaps it was more of a smug fucking smirk. "I uh, own the house next door too," He pointed to the house to the left, which was the closest one to where they were sitting.

"What the fuck man, how rich are you?" Tommy exclaimed, glancing at it. The other house wasn't quite as big as the one they were staying in, but it was still huge.

"Rich enough to pay off the cops if you go missing suspiciously," Technoblade deadpanned, and Tommy cackled. It was probably true, but there weren't even cops on this server.

"Fuck you," Tommy snapped, but there was no real gear "if you do that I'll haunt you forever. Bang lots and pans and shit. I won't be all nice like Ghostbur, I'll be a right menace,"

Tommy didn't realize what he'd seen until he watched Techno's shoulders tense. He wondered when techno had relaxed. "Ghostbur?"

His voice was strained and apparently while he'd told them about Wilbur's death, he'd left out the ghost part. Fuck, he didn't have the energy to explain that.

Tommy scrambled to his feet. "Oh, well, never mind that Technoblade, it doesn't really matter. It's not important, no it's just big man shit, you wouldn't understand--"

He swallowed hard as he looked at Technoblade. Tommy couldn't read his face. He swallowed hard, suddenly feeling both guilty and angry.

".... G'Night Techno,"

Tommy half thought that Technoblade would push for answers, and he couldn't half blame him. Even if Tommy didn't want to give them. He wasn't sure if he would or not. Instead, Technoblade let out a soft sigh.

"Night Tommy,"

Tommy clambered back down into the house, Technoblade still perched on the roof. He wasn't sure if he was grateful or irritated as he slid back into bed.

—

"Good Morning boys!" Tommy bellowed as he bounded into the kitchen.

"Someone's excited this morning," Phil said with a grin. He was standing by the stove, making tea. Bread was on the table, as well as the sand food they'd had all along. Tommy only just stopped from making a face. He was ready for fresh food, not just what was preserved in their inventories.

Whatever. He was hungry. Better than nothing. He slid into a seat by Tubbo, who was already piling his plate with food, and across from Technoblade, who appeared to be reading a book. At the breakfast table. And Technoblade called other people nerds. But Tommy had bigger things to worry about than Technoblade and his rather sad state of mind.

"That, Philza, is because I have big plans. Bigger than you can even imagine. Tubbo and I are signing up for the Bedwars circuit today!" Tommy exclaimed, slamming his hands down on the table for dramatic effect. He was also pretty sure Technoblade's eyes twitched.

"Did you ask Tubbo about this?" Phil asked with poorly hidden amusement.

Tommy scoffed "Phil, we've been planning this for *ages*. He didn't have to ask. It was a *given*,"

"Yeah!" Tubbo agreed eagerly "Even before the whole time-travel stuff we'd wanted to do bed wars! Now, Tommy and I can dominate, because Tommy has so much more practice,"

"Hell yeah Tubbo!" Tommy exclaimed, holding out his hand for a high-five. Tubbo returned it with more vigor than necessary, but Tommy was practically vibrating. Bedwars was fun. He hadn't played since joining the SMP, but it was an adrenaline rush like no other. War was different because there was real fear there. Bedwars was just exhilaration and adrenaline. The worst that could happen is you get forcibly ejected from the game. He and Tubbo had joined the circuits the first time around too, and those were memories he cherished from the first timeline.

Of course, he wasn't the best, but he was a decent fighter, so with some practice they could do pretty well. That's how they'd managed to catch Dream's attention the first time after all..

"I'm plannin' on signing up for PVP tournaments again," Technoblade offered "Bedwars is fun, but I'd rather do PVP right now. Besides, I wouldn't want to compete against either of you,"

"What, scared you'd lose to us," Tommy taunted "The Blade defeated by two teenagers,"

Never mind that Tommy was technically closer to eighteen in his mind now, the point still stood.

Technoblade scoffed. "Hardly. More like I don't want to listen to you whine when I annihilate you two,"

"You wouldn't annihilate us-"

"I don't whine. BIG men don't whine!"

"Bruh, you're literally whining right now," Technoblade said and Tommy glared harder. He wasn't whining, He was making a solid argument!

"Fuck, you Technoblade," Tubbo chimed in sweetly. That was Tommy's best friend, fuck yeah. He ignored Phil's poorly contained snickers.

"Phil, I can't put up with this much longer," Technoblade said flatly "This is why I hate orphans,"

"I thought it was because orphans killed your parents," Tommy shot back. "And I don't know about you, but Tubbo and I have never murdered anyone in our lives,"

"Tommy, you've literally told me that you've killed people before," Technoblade said and Tommy was a bit proud of the faint note of pain in Technoblade's voice. Technoblade's eyes flickered to Tubbo and there was an odd look in his eyes, but it was gone so fast Tommy halfway though he'd imagined it. Perhaps he was looking for backup with Tubbo. As if. Even if they'd *bonded* , or some bullshit like that, Tubbo would always take his side.

"That's fucking- that's slander! Lies and slander," Tommy shouted, pointing a finger at Technoblade. It wasn't obvious, but it was far easier to accuse him of that than have any sort of conversation with Philza, who was probably too stupid to have realized that Tommy had killed before. Technoblade hadn't even realized it.

"It's not. I saw you kill that guy, like a month ago," Tubbo interrupted "Er, I was like half-conscious, when you started stabbing him and shit,"

Before Tommy could start shouting about the betrayal of it all, Tubbo taking Technoblade's side (even though he could really care less, in this instance) Phil interrupted.

"What?"

The three of them all froze. "Tommy killed someone a month ago?" Phil's voice was deceptively even, which meant that he was about to explode or something. Fuck.

"Remember that little scar you freaked out over last week?" Tommy asked, going for casual, trying to hide a mix of irritation and fear. "Some motherfuckers tried to kill the three of us while you were fucking around getting those whitelists or whatever. One of them went for Tubbo, so I killed them. They stabbed me a little though first. No big deal,"

"Yeah, I killed the other two, then I had to pack both of them out of there because they passed out. Lame," Technoblade was obviously trying to lighten the mood but it didn't exactly work.

"Shut the fuck up Technoblade," Tommy snarled. Phil didn't need to know that. That would only make him fuss. Phil didn't get to fuss, because he wasn't there. Maybe it was unfair to punish Phil for something they'd already had a screaming match over, but fuck it, Tommy didn't care. He could hold a grudge if he wanted to.

"Why did none of you tell me about this?" Phil asked, voice tight. "Especially you, Technoblade?"

Damn, Phil has pissed if he was snapping at Technoblade. "It was fine," Technoblade said "I patched Tommy out, and Tubbo didn't even have a concussion. It was literally just some goons. I also kinda forgot I hadn't told you about it,"

"You forgot?"

Tommy bit his tongue, because what he really wanted to say 'if you had fucking been there, that would've never happened, or you would've already known.' but he was also more than happy to not be the center of Phil's anger. He knew from experience that wasn't exactly a fun place to be.

He was also almost certain that Technoblade wasn't telling the truth- or at least not the full truth But Tommy didn't really want to get in the middle of whatever the fuck was going on there when he wanted to sign up for Bedwars, so while Phil was distracted by Technoblade's stumbling excuses, Tommy grabbed Tubbo's hand and a piece of toast.

"Well, as fun as this has been, Tubbo and I have to go. Things to do, people to talk to, shit to steal, you know," Tommy shouted, pulling Tubbo out of his seat and toward the door to the hallway.

"Wait, Tommy, Tubbo-" Phil called, but Tubbo was already pushing him out the door,

"See you two later, gotta go, bye!" Tubbo shouted over his shoulder as he slammed the front door shut and they practically sprinted out into the streets.

Signing up for Bedwars was easy. They basically took anyone who wanted to sign up for the general circuit. Matches were held pretty much daily, and you could fight almost as much as

you wanted to. Tournaments were a little more limited, but one wasn't currently running, so he and Tubbo had plenty of time to hone their skills in both duos and singles before tournament time.

However, it took a few days to work new names into the rotation, so their first competition wasn't for a few days. Tommy wasn't surprised, but it did nothing for the energy that made his hands itch for something to do.

"Let's go train," he found himself saying to Tubbo "Do a few practice moves, you and me,"

Tubbo, who was really the best, just grinned "Sure!" he chirped " I know you have some sick moves to show me,"

"Fuck yeah I do man," Tommy exclaimed loudly, though the plaza they were standing on was so crowded, no one paid "We're going to be unstoppable in Bedwars, especially with tips I managed to annoy out of Purpled-"

Tubbo stopped dead in his tracks, ignoring the way other people barreled into him.

"Purpled?" He exclaimed, his voice rising an octave. "Purpled *Bedwars* ?"

Tommy grinned. He had known some cool fucking people huh? "Yeah man, he was on the same SMP. He was kinda anti-social, but I did manage to corner him one night and chat to him about bedwars just after he joined. Kinda an asshole to be honest though,"

"Purpled Bedwars gave you tips," Tubbo repeated, still sounding a little bit star-struck. Tommy rolled his eyes and grabbed Tubbo's arm, pulling him through the throngs of crowds. God, Purpled wasn't that cool.

"Yeah, yeah," Tommy said, as he pulled Tubbo along, out of the crowded plaza. Even on a server like Hypixel, shouting in the middle of server could draw unwanted attention.

Fuck. he sounded like Technoblade.

"Purpled becomes less cool when he starts trying to kill you and shit," Tommy added.

"Purpled Bedwars tried to kill you?" Tubbo asked. His voice was somewhere between awed and angry, which was such a Tubbo thing Tommy had to snort.

"Nah, not me personally, but he was a mercenary. I think Punz took him under his wing or something. He had a hit out on a few people, but I don't know if any of them ever actually got carried through, Punz definitely carried them out though,"

"What the fuck was your life," Tubbo asked wondrously and with perhaps a touch of concern.

"It was our life, mate," Tommy corrected, "But yeah, it was fucking wild,"

"Think we'll run into Purpled here?" Tubbo asked, allowing Tommy to pull him along,

"Maybe. Purpled isn't usually big on duos, so unless we do a tournament of singles, then it'd just have to be in the circuit. Of course, he spends most of his time in the circuits, so it's not out of the question,"

"Pog,"

Tommy grinned "C'mon, I've got a bunch of cool shit to show you,"

Phil and Techno made up by that evening, apparently, and Tommy wasn't surprised that they were back to being best buddies or whatever. It seemed the issue had been dropped, either because Phil realized there was nothing his nagging could do, Technoblade strong-armed him into it, or because Phil realized that his actual favorite wasn't hurt and Tommy was alive so it didn't matter.

The bitter voice that whispered that last option somehow sounded a little too much like Wilbur for Tommy's taste, so he ignored it and just moved on. If he wasn't getting nagged over a slight stabbing, that was just fine, fuck the reason, he decided as he followed Tubbo into the lying room where Phil and Techno were apparently doing boring shit like putting a grocery list together.

He pasted a smile on his face that was mostly real as he collapsed on the couch between Tubbo and Phil. He'd been up for hours and was tired. That was the only reason that he didn't protest and Phil's wing gingerly came to rest across his shoulders.

That, and Tubbo was leaning up against his side, and Phil's wing was on Tubbo too, and protesting would mean that Tubbo would be disturbed and that just wasn't very pog of him. Besides, he'd almost forgotten how nice Phil's wings felt.

So Tommy interjected in Tubbo's story about their day. Tommy had shown him some of the best, mostly legal places and had a list of other places to work through. They hadn't even stolen anything, but had made a few fucking pog jumps and nearly gotten into a fight, much to everyone else's dismay (even though Tommy was almost certain Techo had snickered when Tubbo talked about pushing someone off a roof, and Phil was definitely hiding a grin about Tommy calling someone a pussy fuck face bitch because they nearly pushed him off a roof)

--

Tommy stared at the books.

If the books had eyes he was almost certain that they would be staring back. He'd wasted as much time as he could, dragging Tubbo to all the best spots of Hypixel (even if Technoblade called them scummy and dangerous), training in the general arena, and doing his best to avoid spending extended periods of time with Techno and Phil, who seemed to have worked through whatever their issues were. He minded them less, far less, than when he'd first woken up in the past, but they would want to talk about the book. And Tommy didn't want to so that.

Between all that, it had been easy to justify not looking at the translation book. To put it off and just .Not think about it. Not fucking obsess over and it and worry about it, because that would be a pussy move, to be worried.

Unfortunately, that wasn't really an option anymore.

Tubbo was dead asleep, despite it being only three in the afternoon (apparently he'd not slept the night before, little bastard), and had crashed after their training session. Phil was out getting groceries that Technoblade hadn't put on his delivery order that he insisted that they needed, and Technoblade was downstairs....doing who knows what.

Technoblade was a fucking enigma, alright.

But, that meant Tommy had the extra study all to himself. Technoblade had apparently been using it for storage, but he'd come home two nights ago and Technoblade had been hovering in the living room, just by the door, more than a little awkwardly. He'd shoved a key into Tommy's hands and gruffly told him that he could use the extra study upstairs if he wanted it, but that if he broke anything, he'd have to fix it himself. Techno had then promptly vanished for the next few hours.

Tommy hadn't really been in that room, but he was certain that only a couple of days before it had been stacked to the ceiling with chests, not lined with bookshelves centered around a solid oak desk that gleamed with fresh polish.

The pens and quills on the desk were new, along with an unopened journal and stack of looseleaf paper.

Tommy wasn't sure why Techoblade changed it. There wasn't anything to gain from doing this.

Fuck he didn't want to think about that.

Tommy groaned before opening the journal first. It glowed faintly. The translation book was already open, and was dizzyingly confusing, with tiny fucking letters that made no sense to him. Staring at the book Karl had given him didn't.

How the hell did he even start this?

Wilbur would, the smartass, say start with the first word. Which, unfortunately, made sense, so for once he listened to his imaginary brother and started with the first line. He wasn't sure how long he stared at it, scrawling things on the paper, before scratching them out (he was pretty sure that Karl hadn't left him a recipe for pumpkin pie, or a mess of letters that spelled out nothing at all) before he crumpled up the paper and throw it angrily at the bookshelf in front of him.

"Fuck Karl Jacobs," he muttered angrily "Fuck the universe, and fuck time travel. This is not pog. This is utter fucking bullshit,"

He was making no progress. None. The sun had apparently set while he was working, and several pieces of crumpled and discarded paper littered the floor around the desk where he'd been working. A lantern he hadn't even noticed glowed above the desk. His back and hand cramped from the position he'd been in and his lip was about to bleed with how much he'd been worrying out between his teeth.

As loathe as he was to admit it, he needed help. He.. couldn't fucking do it. He couldn't translate the book on this own

Whatever. His pride was already in tatters. Technoblade had seen him having nightmares, as embarrassing as that was. Technoblade probably wouldn't gloat too much about being right. He'd be... actually no, there was a chance that he'd be fucking insufferable.

But that wasn't really Tommy's worry. Tommy was a pro at being insufferable, and could dish out any annoyance at Technoblade back ten times over and the bastard would never see it coming. No, he was still worried about what the book contained.

But what choice did he really have here?

He *had* to translate the book. Phil had been patient so far, but soon he'd start demanding results from Tommy, or at least bugging him about doing it. The curiosity was killing Tubbo, but he at least was mostly keeping his mouth shut about it (that was only after he'd practically bitten his head off when he asked a few days ago. The sweet bun that Tommy had shoved at Tubbo a few hours later had nothing to do with it).

Tommy just wanted to go to sleep. When had he actually slept? not the night before, when he just laid in bed, trying not to twitch with nerovus energy, and he'd only managed a few hours the night before that. He wanted to sleep. Or something. He wanted to be back on Phil's server, pretending everything was fine. He wished Wilbur had never fucking left. He wished Technoblade had never come home.

Except he didn't. He *didn't* wish Technoblade had never come back and that was worse. He wanted to hate him still. That would be easier. Everything was just so confusing, and fucking muddled, and fuck if Tommy just wanted to pretend it all wasn't there. That everything was fine. But then again, that's what he'd done in Pogtopia, and all he'd managed to do was let his brother go batshit insane.

But he was tired of being confused and being in the dark. He was always being dragged around and people had been trying to pull the wool over his eyes for years so that he did whatever they wanted. And he was tired of it. He'd fucking time traveled, for ender's sake, and he wanted answers.

He was just tired. Maybe he'd wait a few more days. Maybe he didn't want answers. Maybe he could pretend everything was fine. Maybe? He was going to sleep on it first.

Tommy let his head fall against the desk with a slightly painful thunk. He'd get up and go to bed in a minute- just a minute, but-

Tommy had been locked up in his office all afternoon. Or, the extra office that Technoblade had sacrificed his storage room for. Sure he could've sent Tommy over to the other house he owned (and Ender, Phil had laughed until he almost cried when Technoblade told him why he bought the house. TimeDeo was a good competitor but Technoblade refused to have him as a neighbor. No way.) but it felt wrong to foist him off to a different house.

And okay, yeah that sounded like maybe-

Technosoft

Technosoft

Technobro

Gift giving!

Aww

He doesn't want Tommy to leave.

Aww Techno

Technosoft

-*maybe* it sounded like he didn't want Tommy to leave but that was just Chat misinterpreting things. It was just... easier to look after him, make sure he didn't somehow manage to blow Hypixel up. Well, more accurately, aid and abet Tubbo in blowin' it up. Tubbo was a demon, beneath his wide eyes.

Or avoid dealing what the book entirely, because that seemed equally as likely.

Tommy, for as much as he loved to charge into conflict, didn't seem to like conflict. Or dealing with actual issues. He seemed far more content to shout it out or take it physically if it escalated.

Or by ignoring it. And Technoblade had been almost certain he was ignoring the book. They'd been on Hypixel nearly a week, plenty of time to settle down, especially when Tommy couldn't even start Bedwars.

Technoblade himself had already signed up for PVP and while his start date wasn't for almost two weeks, since he was going straight into more elite matches, he'd already started training again.

Not that he'd really stopped, or that he really needed it, but PVP in a tournament was different than in combat and it gave him something to do, since there was a distinct and unfortunate lack of farming or grinding to do on this server otherwise, unless he wanted to search for hidden chests, which, he kinda did, but that would take days of travel and honestly Technoblade was tired of sleeping on the ground.

He wanted to be at home, okay?

Regardless, he thought that either he or Phil were going to have to stage some other sort of intervention about the book, but then Tubbo passed out and Tommy locked himself in the office and Technoblade breathed a sigh of relief.

Great. If Tommy was started, at least something would come of it.

Except, hours passed, Tubbo woke up long enough to eat the dinner Phil made for them and passed back out, Phil went to bed (or at least to his room to read) and Tommy still hadn't come out.

Phil told Techno to give Tommy space, but it was nearly one am, the kid hadn't come out for dinner, and Tommy never, ever missed a meal, unless he was passed out or havin' a episode. Phil had said he was probably just busy, like Wilbur got, but Technoblade wasn't sure that was necessarily a good thing.

Technoblade should be sleeping. He should be. Realistically he had things to do in the morning but- oh. He is already halfway up the steps.

Well, Technoblade certainly wouldn't sleep until Chat stopped insisting that he check on Tommy at least, and wouldn't happen until he. Y'know. Checked on him. Oh well. And Tommy needed sleep too anyway. He got grumpy without it.

Technoblade knocked on the door, trying to keep his voice down. "Tommy?"

Silence.

Technoblade felt something a little uneasy as there was no response. The door was still locked, and Technoblade knew, *knew*, that Tommy hadn't gone down the hall. He'd have heard it.

He knocked more forcefully, still trying not to wake Tubbo or alert Phil. "Tommy, you alright?"

Still silence.

Technoblade hadn't been there when Tommy had apparently torn like a bat out of hell by going out the window into the snow, but Tommy was *cagey*. Even months later, when he was arguably much calmed, Technoblade couldn't help but worry that maybe Tommy had made a run for it. He'd been talking about leaving, hadn't he? Only a few nights ago he'd been offering to leave. Had he just... decided to leave?

That didn't make sense. He wouldn't leave Tubbo.

So why wasn't he opening the door?

"I'm going to throttle him if he's just ignoring me," Technoblade grumbled as he dug around in his pockets. He might feel a little bad about the invasion of privacy, but he needed to open the door. Chat was freaking out. Tommy wasn't bleeding out. He was probably just ignoring like a little shit.

Finally, he pulled out an innocuous key. It was a skeleton key. Sue him. It was his house. He needed to be able to get in places in case someone was, as Chat was insisting, bleeding out.

"You can't even get murdered on Hypixel," he admonished the roaring voices with an eye roll. There was a host of things that he couldn't understand but he ignored them. The lock clicked quietly and Technoblade pushed the door open to find Tommy, surrounded by crumpled up papers, a smear of ink across his forehead, passed out asleep at the desk.

Technoblade sighed, pausing in the door. It was obvious Tommy was tired, and probably frustrated based on the mess. Technoblade picked up the crumpled paper by his foot, one that Tommy had nearly to the door, and smoothed it out.

Was.... that a recipe for pumpkin pie?

Technoblade frowned and dropped the paper again. If that was all that was in that book. He was going to hunt down Karl Jacobs and murder him personally.

Whatever. Tommy was okay, just exhausted. It made sense- the kid had been going hard, and wasn't nearly quiet about his still consistent nightmares. They weren't nightly anymore, but still too often to be getting good sleep. Or nearly enough sleep for an almost fifteen year old.

Part of him wanted to leave Tommy. He was at least sleeping and was fine (told you Chat- all of you worried for nothing, because Technoblade hadn't worried, no sir) and would be a pain to move.

But... Technoblade had fallen asleep in some strange places and at his own desk many times, or in the potato fields when he went too long without taking a break. At home Phil always moved him. He woke up with cramps in the fields.

Technoblade sighed and closed the gap, gently putting a hand on Tommy's shoulder. Tommy still didn't care much for touch he didn't initiate himself, but that was the easier way to wake him up and since he wasn't having a night terror, it was safe enough. "Toms," he said quietly. "Tommy wake up,"

Instead of shooting straight up, Tommy just groaned and shifted slightly "Tech'lade?" he slurred, obviously still mostly asleep.

Technoblade sighed "Tommy, you gotta get up dude. You're neck'll be killing you in the morning,"

"I'll kill you first," Tommy murmured, not even lifting his head.

"Sure," Technoblade said, "C'mon now, get up. I'll help you to bed,"

Tommy whined, but did lift his head with bleary, half open eyes. Technoblade pulled Tommy to his feet. He was still too skinny. Probably because he just kept growing. He was already taller than Phil, and was slowly approaching Technoblade's own height.

Tommy stumbled and Technoblade looped an arm around him to keep him from falling. Even if you couldn't die, a broken nose would hurt. "Work with me here kid," Technoblade

muttered.

"Fuck you," Tommy mumbled.

"I'll let you fall," Technoblade threatened. Tommy had to have been dead dog tired to still be so out of it. The kid Techno remembered had always been a heavy sleeper. Technoblade couldn't quite identify the feeling that curled in his gut at the idea that Tommy was finally getting comfortable enough to sleep heavily again. It was warm though.

Technosoft

Aww, Technobro

Technoprotect

E

Don't let him fall!

Technobro

On second thought, maybe it was indigestion.

Finally, Tommy woke up enough to mostly walk down the hall on his own before stumbling into the room he shared with Tubbo. He grunted a thank you before the door shut, leaving Technoblade in the quiet dark hallway, alone with nothing but his thoughts and the thousands of voices that made up Chat.

He'd talk to Tommy about the book in the morning. He was going to bed.

Chapter End Notes

1) heyyyyyyyyyyy sorry it's been like,,, almost a month since i updated?? i went out of town and then my day job kicked my ass. I also think i forgot how to write /hj. life updates, I still have a full time job and will also be moving soon! fun things but bad for my writing schedule.

2) there was supposed to be plot I swear there was supposed to be plot I'm so sorry there will be plot next time so help me god. anyway technosoft brainrot. also I wrote ~4k of this on my phone in the car. big middle school vibes.

3) uhh, my alien AU is coming along nicely. go read that if you want. In regard to other works, I have an unrelated one-shot in the works and a one shot about Puffy on the up and up.

4) ehh I'm very sleepy to take this. I love you all. Sleep well, be kind, hydrate, and come scream at me on tumblr if you want im there a lot. byeeeeee

rate yourself and rake yourself

Chapter Summary

Bedrock bros, books, and Bedwars

Chapter Notes

I'm not dead so here is a long chapter to make up for the wait. Beta'd by grammarly as usual

Some violence and a few mentions of past death but nothing too bad here folks.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tommy woke up stiff and sore.

That wasn't entirely unusual for him. Sleeping on the ground, training, and carrying the weight of not only being the Biggest Man in the family, but the entire future on his shoulders left him a little tense sometimes. But, he had been sleeping on a bed for over a week, and really, he shouldn't be this sore except-

Wait.

How did he get to bed?

Tommy cracked an eye open, already tensed and ready to run in case he'd been fucking kidnapped or some shit like that, but a preliminary scan of the room showed that, no, he was in his own room at Techno's house. Tubbo's soft breathing from beside him might should have given it away.

Weird. Last thing he remembered was deciding to ask Technoblade for help and... fuck he'd fallen asleep at the desk. That's why his neck hurt like a bitch. But that still didn't explain why.... Oh.

The memories were a bit fuzzy, but he could vaguely recall someone coming into the room and practically dragging him to bed. He'd been mostly asleep, so it was probably Tubbo if he hadn't woken up.

Except-

Fuck, it couldn't have been Tubbo. It wasn't Phil either- he would have remembered wings wrapped around him, the way Phil always did instinctively. He'd done it less since Tommy protested it. Tommy shoved the feelings away that came with that fact because he didn't really have time to unravel the twisted ball in his gut that immediately came with the thought of Phil in most senses.

So it had to be Techno. Techno, who apparently his sleep-addled mind decided was safe enough not to send his body into overdrive and wake him up. Technoblade who he-

He *trusted* Technoblade.

Fuck.

He didn't really want to contemplate that one either if he was being honest.

It was just barely light outside, and while Tommy knew he couldn't have slept much, he could feel that he wouldn't be getting to sleep anytime soon, so he quietly rolled off the bed and slipped out of the room. If Technoblade was awake, it was as good a time as any to get the 'asking for help shit' over with. It was fucking embarrassing enough, having to go back on his word, but at least maybe he wouldn't have an audience.

Of course, he couldn't be that lucky. He froze as he walked in the kitchen, because instead of Technoblade, he found Phil, sitting at the table, sipping what was likely tea. He was not awake enough for that.

It was too late though. Phil had noticed him.

"Morning, Tommy," Phil said, nodding, with a somewhat hesitant smile. "Sleep well?"

Tommy shrugged, "Well enough, I guess,"

"Good, good,"

Awkward silence fell over the kitchen for a moment as Tommy headed for the cabinets. He was starving- he'd forgotten how much he needed to eat while he was growing- and food was more important than Phil.

"Want any tea?" Phil asked after a minute of silence.

"Not really. I'm not in the mood for any tea, unless there's alcohol in it. Now that, *that* will get you going in the mornings," Tommy rambled, trying to keep the atmosphere light. He'd never really had much to drink- never cared to after seeing what it did to Schlatt, the bastard. Besides, he'd always been more partial to Gapples anyway.

"No way," Phil said with a laugh "Sorry mate, but you're not quite fifteen. No alcohol yet,"

"But mentally I'm almost seventeen," Tommy retorted. "And that's practically an adult, Philza,"

"I don't care, you're still a child, mate. I don't want to stunt your growth or some shit," Phil said, shaking his head.

Tommy scoffed. "My growth cannot be stunned by something like mere alcohol, I'm much too powerful for that,"

"Whatever you say, Tommy," Phil said, and there was something like fond amusement in his voice. It made him want to cringe, and want to lean into the fondness. He sliced off a piece of steak with a little more force than necessary. "Still not giving you any,"

"Fuck off old man," Tommy grumbled, even as he took a seat across from Phil at the table. He supposed he could retreat to another room, but he'd given Phil an ultimatum and so far... he was holding up his part. Tommy had to give him a chance.

He *wanted* to give him a chance.

Whatever.

It was the most convenient place to wait for Technoblade anyway

Silence fell again as Tommy munched on his breakfast and Phil sipped his tea. Tommy watched Phil's wings ruffle slightly- it meant that he was... well if Tommy didn't know better he would say nervous. Hesitant might be a more accurate description. Tommy knew he wanted to ask, and figured he would ask soon, based on how he was acting. The other shoe would drop and he'd start demanding answers that Tommy didn't have yet.

"What time did you get to bed last night?" Phil asked, and Tommy paused, food halfway to his mouth.

"What?" he asked, tension he hadn't even realized he was holding dropping from his shoulders.

"I know you hadn't gone to bed by the time I went in to read. What time did you get to bed?" Phil repeated casually. A little *too* casually, maybe, but at least he wasn't pushing about the book.

"I dunno. I fell asleep at the desk last night. Neck still hurts like a bitch," Tommy took a bite of his food "I think Techno dragged me to bed later,"

"Close your mouth when you chew, that's fucking nasty," Phil chastised and Tommy rolled his eyes "And that's good. At least you got some real sleep- wait, is Tubbo still sleeping?"

"Yeah," Tommy said "He's alright. He hadn't slept in like thirty hours, and I remember from the first time around he was always tired when his horns first started growing in. They'll probably break through the skin soon- you can feel the bumps and shit on his head now,"

"What was he even doing for thirty hours straight?" Phil asked, brow furrowing in apparent confusion.

"Fuck if I know," Tommy grumbled, "It's *Tubbo* ," Realistically, he was pretty sure it involved petty theft and some tinkering, but Tubbo had talked about it once and Tommy couldn't quite follow along, so he'd mostly just pretended to listen.

"Fair enough,"

Tommy was saved from further conversation by the front door opening and shutting down the hall.

"Techno!" Phil called, quiet enough not to wake Tubbo, but loud enough to draw Technoblade into the room. "In the kitchen, mate,"

Tommy had to wonder if the man ever slept. He'd obviously been out and was dressed to prove it. The cape, full armor, his mask, and his hair pulled back neatly into a long braid. Not to mention the crown and some of the other casual gold jewelry he'd found in a drawer here and decided to start wearing again, apparently. If the level of exhaustion Tommy himself was feeling he hadn't really spent very long in bed, and Technoblade had arguably spent less since he'd fucking dragged Tommy to bed and had already gotten dressed and been out.

"Mornin' Phil," Technoblade greeted, then glanced at Tommy "Mornin' idiot,"

"Fuck off," Tommy snapped, too tired to conjure his normally beautifully creative insults.

"Nah," Technoblade said, as he pulled up a seat "Why are you up so early. I dragged you to bed at like, two am,"

"Why are you up, if you were up so late too, huh?" Tommy shot back, rather than answer the question. His sleep schedule was just fucked, ok?

"I didn't sleep. I went and trained. The pro training rings are usually empty between three and six," Technoblade explained as he took his mask off, setting it on the table.

"So, you didn't sleep so that you could avoid people?" Phil cut in "C'mon mate if you wanted to avoid people you could just rent your own arena,"

"Yeah, but that's too much work," Technoblade said "Besides, occasionally someone comes in and it really throws them off to see me there. It's kinda funny, honestly,"

"You know, Techno, you're a bit of a bully," Tommy said, arching an eyebrow.

"What- how am I a bully?" Techno spluttered.

"You literally just admitted to enjoying seeing people in emotional distress, because of you. Sounds like a bully, wouldn't you say Phil?" Tommy pressed.

Phil pretended to think about it, tapping his chin. "I dunno, Tommy, you might be right, but.... Watching those people squirm is pretty fucking funny,"

"I live in a house full of bullies," Tommy groaned, though he really didn't believe it, or care. Technoblade just had that effect on people.

“Keep calling me a bully and you won’t have a house to live in,” Technoblade threatened flatly. And.... yeah that wasn’t exactly funny. Tommy knew it was a joke- Technoblade was joking, literally, only a few days ago Technoblade had told him that he wouldn’t be kicking him out at any point in the foreseeable future, but-

“As if I could be gotten rid of so easily,” Tommy said loftily, hoping that his voice didn’t betray his stupid irrational *emotions* . “Anyway,”

Time for a subject change, fuck what could he talk about- “Techno, I need your help with that stupid book,”

Phil and Techno had been snickering quietly, but when he said that the room went quiet. Too quiet. Not only had he asked for help in front of Philza, of all people, they were staring at him because of it. Fuck off, it was going to give him hives.

They exchanged a look that Tommy couldn’t read before Technoblade turned to him. “You... do?”

Tommy scowled “Unfortunately. It's not that I can’t do it, or any bullshit like that, of course, I can do it,” he rambled

“Of course,” Techno agreed, nodding slowly.

“But- But, I do think it would be more efficient than just me working on it, you know?” Tommy rambled, “And I’m all about efficiency, getting shit done. And I know that you’re very busy, and really you don’t have to help because I can do it myself, and really, honestly, I’m such a big man I don’t even need help, you’re just so pathetic because I know you desperately want to see the book. Really, I’m doing this out of my good fucking graces-”

Phil snorted quietly and Tommy only spared him from a glare, because he was already too busy glaring at Technoblade. “My good graces, I say, so if you want to, or have any spare time, when you aren’t doing cryptic shit or fighting you can-”

“Yes, I’ll help you, Tommy,” Technoblade cut in. “It’ll be better than having to drag you out of the office in the middle of the night,”

Tommy frowned. “Wait, I locked that door last night- how did you drag me out!”

Technoblade Had the decency to look sheepish as he pulled something gleaming out of his pocket “I uh, used a skeleton key,”

Tommy wasn’t really all that angry- only a touch violated, because what he fuck, but his shouts were enough to wake Tubbo, who came downstairs mostly confused. Good times.

Technoblade apparently had nothing else going on, because about thirty minutes later, Tommy was sitting back at the stupid desk with Technoblade sitting beside him. He’d shed the cloak, crown, and armor, but was still wearing his ridiculous ruffled shirt.

It contrasted almost comically with the house shoes he had on. Tommy had already given him shit for them but had finally shut up when Technoblade opened the book.

It had been hard to tell at first, but some of the pages weren't actually part of the book. They had been neatly tucked in and looked close enough that it was hard to tell, but a gentle shake had several pages of Karl's book fluttering out of it.

"They were just stuck in there," Technoblade mused. "Including that first page, you were working on,"

"So... why were they in there?" Tommy asked, trying to peer over Techno's shoulder like it would actually do him any good to see the paper.

"Bruh I have literally no idea," Technoblade grumbled. "I haven't even had time to start yet,"

"Fine," Tommy huffed, slouching back into his seat. "Then start or something bitch,"

"I take back what I said about helping you," Technoblade grumbled, even as he didn't make a move to get up, but rather opened the translation book up beside the journal. "Been here five minutes and you're already annoyin' me,"

Tommy stuck his tongue out at the back of Technoblade's head. He had no idea how Techno knew, but he earned a paper wad to the head for it.

--

Technoblade figured Tommy's restless night would catch up to him once he got still again. He was right of course, and only about fifteen minutes of almost incessant chatter later, and only a mild loss of temper, did Tommy start dozing off in the chair behind him.

He was feeling his own lack of rest too- an hour and a half of sleep really wasn't enough, but he'd done more on less, so it wasn't that hard to keep himself awake, especially when he was presented with a challenge.

Everyone thought that Technoblade wasn't one for the books- they all thought that he only cared about stabbing and blood and competition and while those things were often on his mind, or often something on Chat's mind, Technoblade wasn't a mindless brute.

Technosmart

Nerd!

Technosmart

E

Blood

Technobro

Nerd!

Technocare?

Technonerd?

Nerd!

Haha nerd

Those who knew him and Wilbur often equated Wilbur to the one with the brains. That was... Wilbur was smart, yes, and well-read, but Wilbur was *people* smart. Technoblade loved theory and sought pure knowledge in a way that Wilbur had, for a time when they were kids, appreciated, but never quite felt the same.

And Technoblade liked a challenge. That's why he'd started PVP, at least partially, and the eventual lack of real challenge was at least part of the reason that he'd stopped, among other things he'd rather not think about.

(It was also the reason he had farmed millions of potatoes in an unreasonably short amount of time but that wasn't the point-)

The point was that this was a challenge. And it helped Tommy.

So therefore by extension, it helped Phil. No Chat, this wasn't just for Tommy.

He ignored their general disagreement with his statement. They were just the voices in his head, what did they know?

They didn't know anything about the book, that was for sure.

Useless. All of them.

Okay, fuck you too Technoblade

Bruh that was so uncalled for

We are so helpful, you don't even know-

E

E

Blood

Aww, sleeping Tommy

We are too useful!

Blood

Hey, it's not our fault the dead guy wrote the book in a dead language!

"Please be quiet, if you aren't gonna be actually helpful, Chat," he grumbled under his breath, rubbing his temple. Thankfully, Chat did quiet down enough for him to focus. They could be more annoying than Tommy or Tubbo. Not more so than the two of them combined though. Chat was better than that.

He wasn't really sure how much time passed, as he worked on translating the real first page. Tommy was right- it wasn't easy, exactly, and made his eyes and head hurt, but finally, finally, he had enough lines translated to at least get the start of... something.

"Tommy," Technoblade called, staring down at the translated page. His hands were covered in ink and he'd wasted an embarrassing amount of pages, but something was finally translated into sentences that made sense in like, actual English. "Hey, wake up,"

Tommy jolted up startled "What the- fucking- oh! I wasn't sleeping,"

"I'm not even gonna argue with you right now," Technoblade said, as he shoved the paper toward Tommy "Look, Tommy, The first lines,"

Tommy's eyes widened as he snatched the paper away from him.

"Tommy, I'm so sorry that you are reading this," Tommy read aloud- Techno had already read it, but he didn't mind the repeat performance. "This was my responsibility, my mission, my curse, to be flung through time, trying desperately to fix something that I couldn't quite understand. I failed,"

Technoblade's excitement at success faded. Sure he'd read it, but the weight of the words hadn't exactly hit him until he watched Tommy's face fall, expression closing off like the doors to a stone vault.

"What the fuck does that mean?" Tommy snapped. Thrusting the paperback toward Technoblade "All that work and all-all he does it fucking *apologize* ?"

Technoblade frowned "Those are only the first few lines, Tommy. This journal is thick, and there are several pages loose too we'll have to deal with,"

"Fuck Karl Jacobs," Tommy snapped in response, crossing his arms "Why couldn't he have gotten to the point, or just written it in fucking English. Or common!"

Technoblade sighed. Tommy wasn't wrong but his yelling was only making Technoblade's headache worse. "Well, at least we know it can be translated," Technoblade said, "And listen, Tommy, it's gonna be a slow process--"

"Of course it is," Tommy grumbled. He scowled "Well, I'm done for the day. If I have to look at that stupid book another minute I'll scream and jump out the window,"

"No jumpin' out the window," Technoblade chided. "At least, not in front of Phil. Phil would have a stroke,"

“Old man probably would,” Tommy grumbled, “One time it goes a little wrong-”

“Didn’t you almost literally die?”

“A little wrong, and suddenly jumping out the window means I’ve gone crazy again. I’ve jumped out of many windows in my perfectly right mind,” Tommy protested. “Besides, it’s better than looking at that fucking book,”

Technoblade wanted to point out that Tommy hadn’t been looking at the book- he’d been napping- but that wasn’t really productive, and despite how much Techno kinda wanted to kick Tommy out and spend the foreseeable future working on the translation in peace. That would probably also be counterproductive to the whole ‘Help Tommy’ mission since it might make him bolt.

Or at least make him angry.

“I think you’re right though,” Technoblade agreed and he hid a grin as Tommy almost fell out of his chair in surprise.

“I’m right- of course, I’m right!” Tommy recovered quickly and it was probably only the last few months of spending copious amounts of time with him that Technoblade saw the depths of the surprise that flashed on his face. “A big man like me is always right, Tech-no- *blade* ,”

Huh. When had he gotten so good at reading anyone other than Phil?

“I can think of many examples of that not bein’ true,” Technoblade pointed out. “But this time you are. We’ve spent so long it here, Phil’s probably about to come to check on us to make sure we didn’t kill each other or somethin’”

Technoblade’s hands still from where they had been mindlessly straightening the papers. That joke probably wasn’t a funny joke. Tommy... Tommy still flinched when he moved too fast sometimes, and now-

Tommy let out a snort. “As if, Techno. You’ve trained me too well. I’m simply unstoppable. Unkillable, if you will,”

Technoblade didn’t comment on the slight shake in Tommy’s hands that he caught out of the corner of his eye. Smooth one. He still forgot, sometimes, especially these days, that Tommy still wasn’t okay. That he still held far more secrets than Technoblade cared to think about most of the time. “Is that so? Wanna test it out? We’ve been slackin’ on trainin’ together since we got to Hypixel. Go get Tubbo up and we can do that this afternoon,”

Technoblade didn’t give him a chance to protest before he was out of his death and heading for the door. It’s what Phil used to do with him when he desperately needed a distraction.

“Didn’t you already train today?” Tommy questioned, but didn’t hesitate to follow after Technoblade, leaving the book behind.

“You can never train too much,” Technoblade said instead of answering “Go get Tubbo,”

Technoblade glanced over his shoulder and Tommy had paused behind him and was studying him with a startlingly serious expression- not the one he used when he wanted people to think he was serious, but the one that meant he was serious and clear-headed. It made him look a little bit like Wilbur in a way that made Technoblade's chest twist strangely.

"What are you staring at dickhead?" Tommy snapped after a moment, his serious expression shuttering behind his usual glare.

"Your ugly face," Technoblade said flatly and managed not to crack a grin as Tommy yelled at him.

"How'd it go today?" Phil asked as he strolled alongside Technoblade on the streets of Hypixel. Technoblade was dressed in full garb, mask, and all. People, once, had practically dived out of his path when dressed like this. Then they'd tried to g3et his autograph, for a time. Now they stared at him and gave him a wide berth, as if they got too close he might just snap. It was ridiculous. He'd spent months farming potatoes for Pete's sake.

Technofarm

Potato wars!

Squid Kid honestly deserved the win

Traitor

Fuck you

He literally won the war without bloodshed

It wasn't a real war dumbass

War?

Blood?

Techofarm.

Farm arc?

Technodisguise

Conversely, Phil just had his green bucket hat pulled low on his head and his wings tucked tightly up against his back. If someone really thought about it, they may be able to put two and two together and figure out that it was the Angel of Death walking beside Technoblade, but most people only knew Phil for his dark wings and his more... battle worth outfits. He mostly just looked like a very brave man, that people didn't look too hard at because they didn't want to look too hard at Techno.

“Training?” Technoblade said, even though he was pretty sure that wasn't what Phil meant. He pushed on anyway.

“It went really well. Tommy keeps surpsinin’ me with what he can pull off from session to session. Tubbo isn’t nearly as good- he doesn’t have the instincts like Tommy- but he’s making good progress. I put them through the paces for a few hours, then gave them some money to go eat or something. We accidentally worked through lunch and tubbo was whinin’. Man that kid can be”

“Techno that’s not what I meant.’ Phil butted in gently “I'm glad that went well, but I was talking about the journal,”

“It... it went,” Technoblade settled on, which, ok, fair, was a bit of a weak description. “I managed to get a few lines translated on the first page,”

“Just a few lines? You were in there for almost two hours mate,” Phil exclaimed, his eyebrows climbing high.

Technoblade huffed “Yeah, I know. It isn’t exactly easy Phil. I’d like to see you take a crack at it,”

“Alright, alright,” Phil said, raising his hands in surrender “You know I’d love to but for now I’ll take your word for it. Anyway, what did it say,”

“It was just the Karl guy apologizin’ and mentionin’ his... displacement issue again,” Technoblade said. People already tended to think that he was ten kinds of crazy because of Chat. He wasn’t, of course, but he really didn’t want to go shouting about time travel.

Not only would people think he was crazy, a few of them might even actually believe him, and honestly that might be worse.

“Time-travel?” Phil questioned, a little too loudly to be subtle.

“Bruh,” Technoblade said, giving him a disbelieving look he wasn't sure Phil could entirely make out because of the mask “Don’t tell the whole world,”

“Tech, no one is eavesdropping on you,” Phil pointed out, but relented when Technoblade’s mouth twisted into a deeper frown. “Who taught you to worry so much?”

“It was you old man,” Technoblade retorted, only half-joking. He also learned it from Wilbur, thank you very much. “I think you just like to pretend you’re relaxed,”

“Fuck you I’m not old. I’m very young for an avian,” Phil snapped back, though it was a lighthearted argument that they’d been having since Techno was a teen. “But really, it was just an apology?”

“That’s all so far,” Technoblade admitted “But you’ve seen the journal. Phil, that thing is thick. I think it would take weeks of working on-stop to translate all of it,” Maybe Technoblade could convince Tommy to just let him do it. He could. He was good at things like that and when it came down to it, it would get done faster that way-

“And no one is going to be working non-stop,” Phil interjected “That isn't healthy. Not for you or Tommy or Tubbo, if he gets it in his head to try,”

“I wasn't going to suggest that,” Technoblade grumbled, even though he definitely was. “I'm just sayin' it's gonna take some time. Weeks for sure, maybe months. Baby steps and all that,”

Phil hummed quietly in acknowledgment. “You don't seem to mind,”

“What do you mean?” Technoblade asked.

“Well, only a few months ago you were itching to get away from Tommy. You'd have translated the damn book all day and night even if I'd told you not to, so you could go back to your house. But, not you don't seem to mind the idea of us, Tommy and Tubbo included, staying in your house indefinitely,”

Technoblade huffed. “I'm still makin' good on my promise to you and t' Tommy. I'm a man of my word Phil. You taught me that,”

Phil gave him a knowing smile “Sure that's it mate. I'm glad you're making good on your promise. But... is that it?”

“Yep,” Technoblade answered because it was. It was Chat- stop with the Technosoft crap-“It's just that. Why are you pressing this Phil?”

“No reason Techno. C'mon, I actually saw this really cool fabric shop earlier, Wanna duck in?” Phil asked, suddenly smiling a little too brightly.

That was a subject change if he ever heard one, but Technoblade didn't mind. He wasn't sure he knew what Phil was getting at, or that he liked it if he did, so he grinned “Sure, why not. YOU can spend more of my money, old man. Shouldn't you be like, gettin' a job or somethin'?”

“Hey, call this payback for all shit I bought you as a kid,” Phil joked “Do you remember that training sword? We had one at home, but you were dying to have the new one,”

“Yeah, but I was seven,” Technoblade argued “What are you, seven hundred?”

“Fucking rude,” Phil said “I can't believe you turned out like this. I've got no idea where you got it from,”

“Yeah, sure,” Technoblade said “I'm sure you've got no clue Philza,”

The holding area was high above the map. Tommy had forgotten just how high it was and looking down at how small the map was below him made his head spin in ways that he didn't particularly like. At least here, if he fell, he'd void, or take 'fall damage' and simply respawn. The magic and mechanics of how Bedwars worked went far over Tommy's head, but he trusted them.

He looked down and grinned. It was Rooftop.

It wasn't entirely his favorite map, but it was one of the better ones, with fast generation and a decent setup, unlike Hollow. Tommy fucking hated that map.

"You ready?" Tommy asked Tubbo, as they hung in their own corner, observing the competition. They were all sectioned off in their own areas, so they couldn't hear or touch anyone else, but they could see them through the glass partitions, already wearing their assigned colors for leather armor. Tommy took it as a good sign that they got red. It was simply the best color.

"I was born ready Big Man," Tubbo said, casting him a grin, "we're going to dominate,"

"Remember the plan, Big T?" he asked as if they hadn't been planning their initial strategy since they were seven, and they hadn't been working on it daily since coming to Hypixel.

"As If I could forget," Tubbo said "You offend me. I'm offended. I'm finding a new teammate,"

"You literally cannot find a better teammate. I am the actual best. Besides Tubbo, what about our connection," Tommy goaded, elbowing Tubbo in the side "We can basically read each other's minds, you and I,"

"We're uh, what's the word? Telescope-y?" tubbo suggested "We've got that twin telescope-y shit,"

Tommy couldn't help but cackle "We aren't even twins dumbass. And it's telepathy, the word is telepathy,"

Tubbo gave him a bright smile "No. Sorry. Telescope-y"

"You're a fucking idiot sometimes, you know?" Tommy said. In retribution, Tubbo stomped on Tommy's foot. Hard.

"Ow, that fucking hurt, asshole," Tommy said. They couldn't take real, serious damage, but minor pains weren't important enough for whatever magic the Bedwars system operated under to pick it up and prevent it.

"Good," Tubbo said sweetly, and in reality, it wasn't sweet at all.

"Enough of that shit, let's scout the competition while we wait. One team apparently hasn't shown up yet," Tommy said, scowling at the empty waiting chamber.

"Lot's of them look like little bitches," Tubbo said, raising up on his tiptoes to see. "But pink looks a bit tougher,"

Tommy had been scrutinizing Yellow with a bit of pout, because the two of them looked approximately twelve and too weak to even hold a sword. It was obvious they were new. Tommy figured they'd get rushed first. But, at Tubbo's observation, he shifted his gaze to the pink team.

They looked relaxed- too relaxed. A little older than the two of them, and certainly well trained. They would definitely be their biggest challenge, as far as Tommy could guess.

Yeah, fuck them. Tommy was going to ensure they got demolished.

"We can take them," Tommy announced, giving them a glare. The two assholes, a tall woman and a male hybrid of some sort were talking animatedly, and didn't even look at them which was beyond rude, in his opinion. "We're going to fucking destroy them Tubbo. Even if we lose, we're taking those assholes down,"

"They do look rather like dickfaces," Tubbo agreed "But they also look good... do you think we can take them?"

"Tubbo, my man, I have no doubts. We can absolutely take them,"

--

Tommy had been so busy plotting what their specific play was, he hadn't noticed that the last team arrived until it was too late to get a good look. "Ten Seconds until Start," Flashed in the sky- he also had no idea how the redstone that powered that worked but it was useful.

"This part is weird," he warned, but it was all the warning he could get out before the floor disappeared beneath them.

He had no idea how to exactly describe the feeling of suddenly everything vanishing as the teleportation magic shit took hold, moving you from the high waiting platform to whatever Bedwars arena you'd been assigned. Some people claimed it felt like real respawning.

Tommy didn't know what fucking respawn they'd been doing, but it definitely didn't feel like respawn, since it didn't hurt like a bitch. If he had to compare it to something, it would be like going through a nether portal, but without the stomach twisting nausea and head-spinning vertigo that dimension travel experience.

The teleportation was more... unnerving. It made his skin all tingly and shit, but the second his feet hit the stone beneath him, Tommy was ready to go.

Tubbo... not so much. While he wasn't ill, he was definitely pale and Tommy supposed it was a fair enough reaction. Time-travel was not exactly his friend, but at least no one else would remember him nearly passing out the first time we joined a Bedwars game. That particular secret would follow him to all three graves, even before any of the war shit he was also trying very hard not to talk about.

"You good?" Tommy asked. He'd already started gathering the iron from the dispenser, since they really didn't have time to waste, but did spare Tubbo a glance over his shoulder to make sure he hadn't passed out or some shit.

"Fuck you," tubbo said a little hoarsely "You could've warned me about that one big man,"

"I forgot you hadn't already done it," Tommy explained with a wince "It's hard to keep all that shit separate, ok?"

Tubbo wrinkled his nose “Well, if I pass out, it’s still your fault,”

“You aren’t going to pass out, bitch. Now get over here and take enough iron to build the bed defense like we talked about, and a stone sword,” Tommy instructed, shoving the iron into Tubbo’s hands.

They were required to clear their inventory before they joining the game- apparently, they had some sort of super magic that enforced that too- fucking admins- but were all given a wooden sword when they joined the game. Everything else had to be bought, and couldn’t leave the arena. Swords were either left in the arena or returned in the lobby.

The plan was for Tubbo to build a basic bed defense while Tommy collected enough iron and gold to equip them with stone swords, TNT, and enough wool to rush the next team over.

With fast gen it meant they didn’t have to wait long, but every second they wasted was a moment another team could try and rush them. The second he had enough, Tommy rushed to the items shop, run by a villager (Tommy wasn’t even sure how keeping them here was legal but-) and quickly bought the items. Tubbo had just finished up the bed defense, so Tommy threw the items in his general direction. “Take your shit!”

“Got it!” Tubbo called, even as Tommy turned around and began speed bridging. Tommy was better at clutches and speed bridging. He wasn’t perfect and was rustier than he cared to admit, but by the time they made it to the next base over, they had only just made it to the diamond gen on the other side. One of the green players was

Tommy threw Tnt down, and Tubbo jumped after it heading straight for the bed, as Tommy threw himself down at the teammate on bed defense.

She had an iron sword, but it was obvious she didn’t really know how to wield it properly.. “Rei!” she screamed- probably calling for her teammate “Wait-wait!”

Tommy didn’t wait, pushing her away from the bed easily, as Tubbo began to break through the remaining few blocks the TNT hadn’t exploded. They’d piled it high enough to be annoying.

“Hey, don’t worry,” Tommy said, as he easily blocked her desperate swipes. “You’ll get better eventually. But, for now, suck it,” he crooned. He waited until he heard the tell-tale crack of the bed breaking, before delivering a final blow to her head, causing her to dissolve into a shower of golden sparks. She wasn’t dead- she’d spawn as a spectator above.

Tommy whirled around to find Tubbo teetering on the edge of the platform as the teammate, Rei pushed him back.

Yeah, fuck that.

“Oi!” Tommy called, vaulting over the burning wool easily “eat shit bitch boy,” That distracted Rei for just a second, but it was enough for Tubbo to give him a solid hit in the chest, which was apparently enough for him to dissolve into a shower of sparks too.

"Good one," Tommy said as he grabbed Tubbo's arm and pulled him away from the edge. No point in voiding yet. "I'll grab the diamonds, you go get a gapple- regain your health and upgrade your armor,"

"What about you?" Tubbo asked.

Tommy made a face. These weren't real gapples- just like it wasn't real damage, they didn't utilize real gapples to heal it. However, Tommy didn't even really want to eat a fake one, after how long he'd subsisted solely off of them. Not to mention he hadn't really ever gotten over the cravings for the real one, before that body... well, he didn't want to go through that again. "I'll get armor in a minute. I didn't take any damage. I'm good,"

Tubbo didn't look like he believed him, but it was Bedwars and there was no time for such stupid things, so Tommy bounded off as Tubbo headed to restock on supplies.

Tommy popped over the top of the spire the spawner was on, and to his unwelcome surprise, another person did the same.

"Fucking hell," Tommy swore, drawing his sword. Thankfully the other person seemed just as surprised to see him as he was to see them, and unlike Tommy, they didn't quite have the instincts to immediately draw their sword, so Tommy landed two good hits before they managed to even block him.

However, once they got the sword up, Tommy grudgingly had to admit they were pretty good. They landed a hit to his chest and Tommy hissed, kicking out to try and knock them off balance. It only sort of worked and unfortunately their scuffle had drawn the attention of the other teammate and Tommy was left defending against two of them, as he was driven dangerously close to the edge.

"Tubbo!" He bellowed as he dodged a nasty swipe at his head "Could use a hand!"

He didn't wait to see if Tubbo heard him, before placing a block directly in front of him and jumping backward. He just managed to clutch at the base of the tower, nearly careening off, but the wool prevented most of the fall damage. He pressed his back flat up against the wall, as one of them dropped down to try and get him. They landed the clutch, barley, and while they pinwheeled dangerously, sword tucked in their inventory, it only took one hit to send them into the void below.

A second later, another one fell past him screaming. Tommy looked up to find Tubbo grinning down at him. "Go for the bed!" Tommy shouted up, waving at him "I'll be right behind you"

Tommy towered up, using the last of his blocks to get back to the existing bridge. That was fucking great since he really didn't have time to grab anymore before running after Tubbo, sword drawn in hand.

Ender, Phil would flip his shit if he saw Tommy running with a sword like that. For all the practice he'd preached about fighting, he'd always hated it when they ran with swords.

Tommy was far more used to it now, even in this body. Phil could suck it. He wasn't going to fucking impale himself or anything stupid.

Tommy made it to their island where Tubbo had gotten the bed uncovered, but both teammates were attacking him. He was holding his own, but Tommy could see sparks flying as the sword clanged off his armor.

Thankfully they were distracted enough that when Tommy practically dropped on their heads they weren't ready. A swift hit to the face sent one of them sprawling backward, while Tubbo managed to get enough of a breather to start blocking the hits again. Tommy took the slight reprieve to break the bed, before rounding back on the one he'd knocked out. They were back on their feet, but looked dazed. "Eat shit, bitch," Tommy crooned, sending him off into a shower of golden sparkles.

"Fuck yeah!" Tubbo cried from behind him, and a moment later another announcement flashed over the center. Another team down.

The next several minutes were rather adrenaline-filled. Tommy managed to keep from falling off any bridges, and they eliminated another team entirely with ease. The pink team, as predicted, also seemed efficient. No one had targeted their bed, though that was likely because Pink was on the opposite side of the map. And Tubbo and Tommy had cleaned their side of the map as well. Tubbo had only died once, falling off of the bridge while fighting. Tommy had been busy breaking the bed, and by the time he realized what had happened, Tubbo was back. That didn't stop Tommy from ruthlessly driving the competitors off the bridge, but that was his own business.

Soon, it was down to just Pink, Grey, and themselves. Pink and Grey were fighting on Grey's base while Tommy and Tubbo stood in mid, having collected a healthy amount of emeralds. "I'll pearl over and grab Pink's bed. You head back to base, and get ready in case they rush," Tommy said.

"Got it," Tubbo said "I have some fucking brilliant defense ideas,"

"Don't get carried away," Tommy warned, as he threw the pearl as hard as he could toward Pink's base. Grey's bed exploded in the background "I'll be fast. Hopefully, we can rush them"

"Shut up," tubbo said, before turning back toward their base "Don't die."

Tommy didn't have time to tell him to fuck off before he was yanked violently across the map. He landed into a roll since he could never quite manage to land on his feet when he peraled and made a face. Fuckers had gone a little bonkers on bed defense and- everything went dark.

Of course the bastards had a trap.

Tubbo had thankfully shoved an ax at him earlier so he easily broke through the outer layer and the glass, then used his sword to tear apart the wool. He hoped he was actually managed to get toward the bed instead of just digging through this bullshit because-

"Gotcha," some said as their sword came down hard against his back, clanging painfully against his armor.

Tommy bit back a yell "That fucking hurt," he growled spinning around just in time to block another hit that came out of practically nowhere. Fuck, he needed the trap to expire soon.

"That's kinda the point," the person said "I'm trying to win this thing,"

"Funny," Tommy said, blinking as light suddenly flooded his eyes, disorienting him more than the darkness had. Fuck those traps "I am too dickhead,"

"Creative insult there pal" The guy shot back, and Tommy barely had time to block; he was dangerously close to being done. It wasn't the end of the world, since they still had their bed but-

A crack resounded throughout the arena. Fuck, scratch that, they *didn't* have their bed.

"Sounds like it's not going well for you"

"Shut the fuck up," Tommy snarled. And see, the thing was, the thing was, the other guy was good. He was obviously more experienced at Bedwars than Tommy had more years of training, especially in Tommy's body that seemed to develop a new center of gravity every other week. However, it was also obvious he'd only ever really fought in the arena. Maybe a few zombies and skeletons, but he'd never fought for his life. Tommy had.

And while Bedwars wasn't his life, he'd be damned if he got so close to winning and gave it up. Nothing else ever went right, he was fucking taking this.

The ferocity of Tommy's push startled the man- enough for Tommy to land a solid hit that sent him stumbling back into the void. Tommy vaulted over the discarded materials and broke the bed in a few swift hits. He hadn't seen Tubbo yet and he wasn't sure if he was still in the game. Fuckers had murdered Tubbo. Not really, but that still wasn't very pog of them, now was it?

Tommy spun around, ready to catch the guy and respawn, but was met with a sword to the face so fast it didn't have time to hurt before he was laying flat on his back in the spectator chamber above the arena, with Tubbo hovering over him.

For a split it was cold, as his body ached and tingled, the residual magic in his system keeping him alive, bordering on almost too much. The sky was spitting snow and ash and Tubbo was sobbing and his ears were ringing. For a second- he choked on a gasp, as he snapped back to reality and the sound of the winner announcement going off. He swallowed hard and clenched his hands so Tubbo wouldn't see them shake.

"Fuck," he swore, a touch hoarse "We fucking lost to those pussies, I can't believe it,"

"It's alright," Tubbo said, even though he sounded a little distant. "We'll get them next time. It was a pretty good first run, I reckon,"

"Yeah, but we still lost," Tommy grumbled, as he allowed Tubbo to pull him to his feet. "I can't believe it,"

Tommy should've been able to win a fucking Bedwars game. Even if Tubbo had technically never done anything like it before and Tommy hadn't really played Bedwars in a while, he should've been able to carry. Tubbo was pretending to be fine, but something was bothering him- probably the fact that they lost, because Tommy was too fucking slow. Fuck, if he couldn't even win Bedwars, how useless was he-

"Tommy! Tubbo!" Tommy whirled around to find that the glass partitions had dropped, and Phil was making a beeline for them. The fuck? How had Phil gotten there so quickly? "That was a brilliant match, boys,"

"What?" Was all Tommy managed, before Phil had pulled Tubbo into a brief hug, and before Tommy had time to process, Phil had pulled him into a brief hug, warm hands clapping around his back, before releasing him. Tommy blinked in surprise as Phil kept grinning like he hadn't just hugged Tommy.

The last time Tommy had really let Phil hug him was that night on the roof months ago. Phil hadn't really asked since then and Tommy hadn't really wanted him to of course, but it seemed like he hadn't even noticed, in all his excitement. Apparently. And Tommy didn't wish it might have lasted a second longer.

"Your Bedwars round," Phil stated, like that cleared anything up. "It was great!"

Was he... Was he excited that they lost? The fuck?

Phil didn't notice his confusion or maybe just ignored, as he answered "You two were brilliant out there, even up until the very end. I was on the edge of my seat. I really thought the two of you had it in the bag,"

"Obviously we didn't," Tommy grumbled "We still *lost*,"

"So?" Phil said "You two still did brilliantly out there, especially for your first run"

"Technically-" Tommy started, then paused "Wait you watched the match? Doesn't Technoblade have a fight today too?"

"Course I watched it. I've seen Techno fight dozens of times. I wanted to see you. Both of you," Phil said like that was just something he could say. Like it didn't leave Tommy's head spinning because what the fuck-

"Anyway, even though you didn't win, the two of you killed it out there," Phil continued casually "In no time the two of you will be wiping the floor with the competitors. I mean, you almost held your own against BoomerNa and Hannah Rose,"

"That's who I was fighting?" Tommy exclaimed. He knew the pink fighter at the base looked familiar but he hadn't been able to place who it was. He'd never met Boomer before, but he

had a reputation of being one of the best Bedwars players in the circuit. He wasn't particularly familiar with Hannah, but he'd certainly met her, considering she'd join the SMP.

"Holy shit that was Hannah Rose," Tubbo breathed. "She destroyed my bed defense," Tubbo said, sounding slightly starstruck. That was honestly a fair reaction- Tommy didn't blame him.

"She did mate," Phil agreed, half consolatory, half laughing. He placed a hand on Tubbo's shoulder, "After she got you and your bed, she voided and managed to get Tommy,"

Tubbo seemed... maybe he was in shock. Tommy didn't know. He certainly had an odd look on his face, that Tommy definitely didn't like. It reminded him a little too much- well, Tommy didn't really want to think about what it reminded him of.

Phil placed his other hand on Tommy's shoulder "If you'd have had a half-second more warning I think you could've blocked her and maybe won mate,"

Tommy huffed "Well, I didn't. But, I suppose if I lost at least I lost to a woman, Far more respectable, that, losing to a woman,"

Phil laughed, even though Tommy didn't really think it was even that funny. He just didn't know what else to say, and his motto was when it doubt cursed it out. If that doesn't work, start talking about women.

"Well, even if you lost, that wasn't too shabby for you boys on your first run. Technoblade--"

"Ender, Technoblade will be so smug about this," Tommy groaned, heart sinking with realization, as they slowly started to head out of the spectator area, abandoning their wooden swords in the designated area.

"Maybe a little," Phil admitted, ruffling Tommy's hair. What the fuck was up with Phil and physical affection all of a sudden? "But he'll probably just be proud, even if he won't admit it,"

"Proud of what?" Tommy asked, batting Phil's hand away, with maybe a little more force than necessary. "We lost,"

"Mate, yeah, you lost," Phil said "But the two of you executed a brilliant strategy and put up a hell of a fight against two well-established Bedwars players- two that people are betting will become champions. He helped train you two, of course, he'll be proud. Hell, he was upset he didn't get to come to watch,"

"Technoblade wanted to watch us too?" Tommy repeated, well aware he sounded like an idiot. His voice pitched high and he winced, as some of the other competitors, Tommy thought they might be the green team, shot them a look. "Wait, no of course he did. Probably to critique us or some shit,"

I swear to ender- fucking hell Tommy," Phil said "You're like talking to a wall mate. Technoblade wouldn't admit it, but give him a break, he really just wants to watch you. Yeah,

he'd critique you, probably but that's like his main form of communication. He'd critique anyone given the chance. He tried to get his match rescheduled, but they told him it wasn't possible and that he'd have to sit out another week's rounds if he didn't play, even with his rank,"

"I want to meet the admin brave enough to tell him no," Tommy said "They're my new favorite person. Sorry Philza, Tubbo, they're my hero. Who the fuck looks at the Blade and says no? He had to have some fucking massive balls,"

"She wasn't even an admin, mate," Phil corrected with a shit-eating grin. "Refused to get higher-ups, said she didn't know who he was and didn't give a shit. She wasn't getting fired to rework the schedule for him,"

Tommy couldn't help but crackle at the idea of some random woman telling Technoblade to fuck off, not even cowering. "That's fucking brilliant,"

"Technoblade was both pissed off and impressed," Phil admitted "But his fight will probably be over. Let's go find him and eat. I know you all have to be fucking starving since you worked so hard,"

Tommy was hungry as fuck and Tubbo... Tubbo was still being oddly quiet. Normally he'd be right with Tommy talking shit about Technoblade "Tubbo you wanna eat, man?" he asked over his shoulder, where Tubbo was trailing behind him.

Tubbo half startled "Eh, I dunno boss man. I ate a lot earlier. I'm just a bit tired- I think I'm going to head back to the house,"

Phil frowned, finally realizing something was wrong "You alright Tubbo? Want us to head back to? I'm sure we've got food at home,"

"Food at home, what are you an old man," Tubbo said, teasing. "Nope, just a bit tired 's all. I'll see you all later,"

Before Tommy could even protest, Tubbo had slipped into the thrumming crowds on the streets of Hypixel and vanished.

"Something's not right," Tommy said, staring off in the direction of his friend. "We should go after him, I reckon,"

"He's probably just disappointed, Tommy," Phil tried "Or tired. Growing in hybrid traits is exhausting and his horns have to be close to breaking the surface,"

Phil... Phil wasn't wrong, necessarily. Tubbo's horns were close, from what Tommy could tell, and he hadn't been sleeping well, but this was something more. This was Tubbo. He knew something was up. Maybe something Tommy should've already seen, if-

"Listen, if you're that worried mate, I'll send Techno a message to head home instead. He'll make sure Tubbo eats something and at least pretends to sleep," Phil reasoned "He'll

probably want to avoid people after the match if possible. So we can go eat and he can check on him, alright?"

Tommy really didn't think that Technoblade would hurt Tubbo. Tommy... sometimes he couldn't help his instincts, but he'd long stopped really fearing what Techno would do to Tubbo or even Tommy physically. That didn't mean some little part of him didn't want Technoblade to stay away. Maybe it was the shitty part of him that would always see Tubbo as his best friend, as the one he trusted more than anyone in the world, that said he needed to be there. Tommy needed to fix it. He had managed to mangle the future already, so he needed to fix this-

"Tommy, c'mon. Tubbo will be fine," Phil said, interrupting his train of thought, with a gentle hand on his shoulder. "Technoblade will make sure he's alright. You don't need to worry. Just take a minute and get some good food mate,"

"Fine," Tommy grumbled "And for the record, I'm not worried, I just don't want to try and replace a best friend. That's too much work and he's a good Bedwars partner,"

"Sure mate," Phil said with a chuckle "Like you didn't literally kill someone for him,"

That startled a laugh out of Tommy. It wasn't exactly funny and his laugh was a little sharp and barking, but. "Fuck Philza, that was-"

"A little too much, sorry," Phil said, wincing. "Sorry, Tommy I didn't-"

"It's fine," Tommy said, cutting off the apology "It's- shit I just wasn't expecting you to say that, what the fuck?"

"I'm not wrong Tommy," Phil countered "But, enough about that. Let's go get some food so you won't be so grumpy,"

"I'm not even that hungry," Tommy protested. Something had been off about Tubbo, the longer he thought about it. He'd just been too quiet and-

Tommy's stomach chose that moment to growl. Loudly. His face flushed as Phil cackled, his enhanced hearing picking up the sound over the crowd, which was rude. "Sure you aren't. C'mon. Tubbo will be fine mate. We'll grab him a sweet bun somewhere- I think that there's one near the new place I want to try,"

Tommy was just a bit taller than Phil now, but that didn't stop Phil from slinging an arm around his shoulders. It was a touch awkward from Phil's angle, and it would've been easy to shake it off. Phil probably would've gotten the message and not bothered with it again. He could easily put distance between them. He probably should put distance between them.

Tommy didn't shrug Phil's arm off.

Chapter End Notes

1) ok, so I know it's been a month and I'm very sorry. I've been working on this chapter for most of that month. But, since the last time I updated I've moved and then I can count on one hand the number of nights I've been home before 8pm. I've just been coming home and going to bed. I still love this fic, my real life has just got me by the throat and is attempting to prevent me from writing.

2) Some plot! They translated the first part of the book! Philza is trying to re-son techno. Tommy and Phil slight healing arc?

3) Next few chapters will include: Time skip, more book, new characters, and perhaps the wayward son getting another chapter. Also the answer to what's going on with Tubbo. Also keep an eye for a series update soon! Make predictions if you wish I love seeing your theories.

5) I posted an unrelated BeeDuo one shot. Hopefully my alien au will be updated in the next 5-7 business days, but what I've written so far... go check it out if you want. It's my AN and I can self promote if I want to:

5) Good night people! Come yell at me on Tumblr if your wish. Rest well, hydrate, make sure you eat, be kind to others and yourself.

ain't nothing in this world for free

Chapter Summary

bonding and a new character has entered the chat

Chapter Notes

Just the normal warnings in the tags

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Tubbo honestly didn't remember the walk home.

He remembered the end of the match and Phil showing up and telling them about Hannah and Boomer. He vaguely remembered the conversation after that, where Phil wanted them to go eat with Technoblade and-

Tubbo's stomach rolled again and he groaned, pressing his face into the cool bathroom wall. He couldn't stand the thought of going. He was fine. He'd be fine. If he'd gone Tommy would have pushed about and if he pushed hard enough Phil would have realized something was wrong.

And nothing was wrong.

He was just tired.

That was it. That was why his hands had trembled slightly in Tommy's as he'd helped his friend to his feet. He was just tired and he'd eaten something bad and he was fine. He didn't want to risk ruining whatever was going on with Phil and Tommy (because Phil was trying. HE was trying harder than he had before and harder than his guardian had ever tried for Tubbo) so he went home.

And he was fine. He'd get to bed before the others got home, and they'd be none the wiser (though there was nothing to be wise about). He'd wake up in the morning and it would be-

"Tubbo?"

His head spun as he sat up a little too quickly. Fuck, Technoblade was at the door. Why was Technoblade here? How long had he been laying on the bathroom floor?

“Techno?” he called, voice steadier than he thought it might be “What do you want, boss man?”

“I cam to check on you.” Technoblade said from the other side of the door “Phil said Tommy was worried about you after the bedwars match”

“Tommy worries too much. He talks a bit of shit but he’s always so anxious. Like one of those little shaky dogs.” Tubbo said, “He’s a big worry wart.”

“Well, he got it honest from Phil.” Technoblade said from the other side of the door. “Phil pretends not to, but he just worries all the time.”

“Yeah, well, they both should stop.” Tubbo said “I’m fine. Don’t worry about me.”

“If you’re fine, can you come out of the bathroom?” Technoblade prodded. “Or can I at least open the door to make sure you aren’t dyin’?”

Tubbo scowled. He didn’t really want Technoblade to open the door. He wanted to be left alone. Because he was fine.

But, if he didn’t open the door, who knows how long Technoblade would hover outside the door trying to make conversation. Tubbo knew that Technoblade was trying, but really, he didn’t need to try with Tubbo. Tommy needed help.

Tommy was the one with issues. Tommy was Technoblade’s brother and Tubbo was just along for the ride and-

“Tubbo, unless you’re indecent I’m comin’ in. You’re too quiet” Technoblade warned “You got ten seconds.”

“Fuck off”Tubbo groaned, without much heat.

A few seconds later the door swung open and Tubbo didn’t have enough energy to move from his position on the floor, leaning against the wall. He’d taken a shower and gotten dressed, but hadn’t bothered to make it any further. Not because anything was wrong, he was just-

He just didn’t want to. It was fine.

Technoblade appeared to have come straight from his own fight, still wearing his boots and full outfit. At least, as much as what was at face level. “Comfortable down there?”

Tubbo shrugged “More comfortable before you started bothering me, Blade.”

“You’re sittin’ on the floor, and look a little pale.” Technoblade said “You haven’t even looked at me.”

“That’s because you’re ugly.” Tubbo said immediately “I don’t want to look at your ugly mug.”

“Bruh.” Technoblade said flatly “If you didn’t look sick or something I’d make you go to training for that.”

“I can’t believe you’re trying to silence me.” Tubbo complained “Always trying to keep the little guy down. I was just speaking my truth Technoblade.”

“You’re not speaking your truth, you’re just being annoyin’.” Technoblade said “And can you at least leave the bathroom so I can tell Phil and Tommy you went to bed? Or are in the kitchen?”

“What if I don’t want to?” Tubbo asked stubbornly, crossing his arms “What if I’m perfectly comfortable here?”

Technoblade was silent for long enough that Tubbo was starting to get antsy. Then, Techno let out a long sigh “You’re really gonna make me get down there, huh?”

Before Tubbo knew it, Technoblade was sitting on the floor across from him, crown and all. *Why?*

“What are you doing?” Tubbo asked, “Technoblade, I just want to be left alone I’m-”

“If you say you’re fine, that’s a lie. You’re shakin’ Tubbo.”

Tubbo hadn’t realized it, but at some point he had started shaking. Especially his hands. Why was he shaking? He was fine. He’d just lost a bedwars match. Tommy was the one who looked bad. He was the one who’d looked scared when he’d respawned. Tommy was the one with trauma.

“I’m just overreacting.” Tubbo said “I’m fine. I’ve been through nothing, compared to Tommy and-”

Tubbo’s throat was not thick “I’m fine, Technoblade. Go worry about Tommy or something. He needs it.”

“It’s the night of the fire isn’t it?” Technoblade asked after a moment. His voice was uncharacteristically soft.

Tubbo choked on the lie that stuck in his throat. He wanted to deny it, because nothing too bad even happened, but-

“Yes,” he said quietly. “And- it’s not the fire it’s-”

Tubbo’s stomach rolled, as he pictured the man on the roof. The fire. The pain.

“Did I kill him? That man on the roof- did I, is he dead?” Tubbo asked, forcing himself to look up at Technoblade for the first time since he’d come in.

The hesitation on his face was answer enough.

“Fuck” Tubbo swore “I killed him? I knew it. I knew I’d killed him and-” Tubbo swallowed hard.

“Yeah, you killed him.” Technoblade eventually said “It was his last life, too. He’s dead Tubbo and- and that’s a good thing.”

“You’re right.” Tubbo said, trying to ignore the way his stomach filled with lead “I know that it’s good because he was a nasty motherfucker but- well- I didn’t. It’s stupid. I’m fine with it I just wasn’t sure I’d actually...”

“It’s okay to not feel great about it,” Technoblade said, far too gently than Tubbo needed. Tubbo wasn’t fragile. He wasn’t. He was fine. “Listen, it took me a long time to get so uh, comfortable with, well, blood, as I am today. And it’s not necessarily somethin’ to be proud of. And it’s not easy when you’re fourteen to kill a man.”

“I’m fifteen.” Tubbo corrected. His birthday had come around the time the chaos with Tommy had started and Tubbo could fault no one for forgetting “And Tommy did it. You did it.”

“Tommy’s not really fourteen.” Technoblade countered “Not as much as I wish he was sometimes, that wasn’t his first rodeo Tubbo. And me? Yeah, I did. But I didn’t enjoy it. Not really.”

“You’re Technoblade,” Tubbo argued. Technoblade had to think he was a fool. He wasn’t sure he regretted killing the guy- in fact, he knew he didn’t. But somehow- “You’re the Blade.”

“I wasn’t always.” Technoblade said, and Tubbo would have to be an idiot to miss the slightly bitter note in his voice “I was- I was a kid too once, Tubbo. The first time I killed someone wasn’t pretty and neither was the aftermath. But, listen, Phil told me somethin’ and I’m gonna tell it to you. It doesn’t really matter what you do-doesn’t matter how much blood you spill- as long as you come home. Keep yourself safe. That’s what matters. And listen, none of us, none of us can or would judge you for this. Phila and Tommy don’t know but they wouldn’t care Tubbo. They’d probably just be pissed they couldn’t kill that bastard themselves. I know I was.”

Tubbo didn’t know what to do with that information.

There must have been something on his face because Technoblade sighed. “Tubbo, listen, I’m not the best person for this kind of stuff. You should talk to Phil or even Tommy, but uh, listen. This isn’t... you’re gonna be alright. You did the right thing, kid. It was you or him, and you made the right choice. I’m just sorry that I wasn’t there to keep you from havin’ to make that choice.”

Tubbo swallowed hard. He was still shaking. “I didn’t... I don’t even know if I’m just upset about that. It was just- Tommy was so upset and Phil was so excited, and I could only remember the fire-” And the way Tommy’s face had shuttered with nothing

“It was just a lot, huh?” Technoblade said. “Well, you don’t have to do it-”

“I do!” Tubbo interjected. Tommy was so excited and- he was too. Bedwars was his dream. He wasn’t- he wasn’t going to let this ruin it for him. For Tommy. For the first time his friend had been actually excited in months. “I want this, Technoblade. I do.”

Technoblade nodded slowly “Well, in that case, you’ll just have to face it Tubbo. It’ll get easier. It’s a kinda rigged process, that you gotta suffer through it first, but it’ll get better if you really want it. And kid, now that you know, it will.”

Tubbo sighed “It doesn’t really feel like it Big T.”

“No, it won’t for a while yet.” Techno said “Killing someone takes somethin’ out of you. And really, if you want to tell Phil- I know that I said we shouldn’t tell but I wasn’t thinkin’ about- well, I can handle how pissed Phil’s gonna be at me. He’ll get over it soon enough if you tell him.”

“I can handle this myself,” Tubbo said. He could. He’d been handling it. He’d been handling that and the horns, and the sudden urge to munch on flowers when he saw them quite well. He swallowed hard “Do you have anything for my head? It really hurts.”

Technoblade frowned, as he rose to his feet “Sorry kid, no healin’ pots for hybrid traits. It can stunt their growth. But, why don’t you get somethin’ to eat then go on to bed? You look like shit and bein’ asleep is probably the only way to get Tommy and Phil off your back.”

Tubbo took Technoblade’s offered hand silently and allowed Techno to pull him up. He swayed a little more than he anticipated and Tubbo was secretly grateful for Technoblade’s strong arm catching him.

“Careful.” Technoblade admonished “Can be fallin’ over like that.”

“What, like you’ve never fallen over?” Tubbo retorted, even as he leaned against Technoblade’s side. The hybrid was warm where he was a little bit too cold, from the stint on the bathroom floor.

“Nope.” Technoblade said, suddenly his normal tone again “I’ve never fallen a day in my life. If you have that’s lame. Be better.”

“That’s fucking rude.” Tubbo grumbled, even as they made their way down the hall “And you’re a liar.”

“Bruh, when have you ever seen me fall?” Technoblade asked, arching an eyebrow. Tubbo frowned.

“I dunno, but watch your back big man. Even the mighty fall, and I take pleasure in being the ones to bring them to their knees.” Tubbo warned as he shook Technoblade’s arm from him. HE could make it to his own bed. He was fine.

Technoblade snorted something that sounded suspiciously like a laugh. If he wasn’t so tired Tubbo would call him out on it. Instead, his head was pounding more than it had in days and while he felt marginally better, all he really wanted to do was sleep.

“Think about it Tubbo.” Technoblade said as Tubbo closed the door behind him “Talk to Phil.”

Tubbo hummed something akin to agreement, though he had no intentions of following through, and flopped onto the bed. Even with what had happened, Tommy was the one that needed attention, not him. Tubbo was fine. He was fine.

Sleep took him quickly.

Dinner with Phil had been a little bit strange but... it hadn't been bad.

They'd had dinner, just the two of them. Tommy had allowed himself to laugh, still feeding off the adrenaline high of the fight, and allowed Phil's warm laugh and even fucking better food to ward away the cold that lingered around his hands from the fucking respawn mechs. A message from Technoblade assuring them that Tubbo was fine- his horns were just bothering him and he'd gotten overextended, between the magic his body needed to manifest hybrid traits and what was used during Bedwars respawns.

Tommy hadn't been sure that was it. Tubbo had seemed off, more so than usual, but when Tommy got home, he- well, he didn't exactly have a good time. Maybe he fucking screamed, but what the fuck are you supposed to do when you walk into a room to find your best friend laying in a pool of his own blood.

Apparently, having a small freak out was an overreaction? So what if he didn't sleep for two days after because he had nightmares about Tubbo dying? That was his own fucking business, thanks.

But, after that Tubbo did seem to get somewhat better, even if he still wasn't sleeping any more regularly than Tommy, but hey, that was Tubbo sometimes. Not like Tommy could force him to sleep when he couldn't even get his own mind and body to corporate.

Tommy had figured it was a one-off thing though, that Phil had shown up and watched their Bedwars match. Phil would probably be less interested as time went on, now that he'd made at least one appearance at a Bedwars tournament. Phil probably would pat himself on the back and go back to supporting Techno at PVP

But that didn't happen. He and Tubbo kept competing (and Tubbo really had been fine that afternoon according to Technoblade, and he'd then been mocked mercilessly for being a worrywart) and kept getting better at duos. They weren't as good as someone like Purpled, or Hannah Rose, but they were *good*.

Good enough to win consistently, even against more experienced players. Good enough for there to be rumbling of perhaps an invitation to one of the next tournaments, if they kept up their streak.

And every time, win or lose, Phil was there waiting when they were done. He always had compliments about the match and sometimes suggestions, and usually an offer of food.

Technoblade was there too if he didn't have his own match or business to attend to. He was less excited than Phil, but he was there.

It was weird.

Like, what the fuck? It was just Bedwars. Phil didn't have to watch them every time but he did.

Tommy wasn't really sure what to do with that information. So, among other issues, he would simply be fucking ignoring it for as long as he could.

Easy.

He deserved to ignore some problems since he was unfortunately no longer able to ignore the book. Technoblade was ducking relentless. Even with Techno's fucking single-minded determination took to get it translated, it was slow going. They'd nearly translated three pages of it. It had been nearly a month.

Though, to be fair, they didn't spend all their time translating it, since Phil insisted that they have some sort of life balance and neither of them were totally willing to give up their competition anyway.

All of it was useless bullshit in his opinion, just Karl rambling on and on about how sorry he was.

"Tommy, I'm so sorry that you are reading this. This was my responsibility, my mission, my curse, to be flung through time, trying desperately to fix something that I couldn't quite understand. I failed.

It should not be your responsibility, but it is now. I will assume that I'm also probably dead, or at least the version of me that you know is. Even as I write this, I can feel the timeline unravelling around me. Oh, that sounds terribly dark, but honestly? That's not a bad thing Tommy. Not necessarily. Not when I know what happened.

See, at first, I didn't understand my mission. I still don't, not when memories are slipping out of my grasp so fast. I don't even remember what Q S they look like now, you know? Sometimes I wake up and can't even remember my name. I But I know I was supposed to stop the Egg. I know I was supposed to get this book to you.

That's why the universe or whatever is in charge of all, chose me, I guess, or at least why they chose someone to be a time traveler. I have no idea why they chose me. That doesn't matter. I've gone forward and back in time, over and over again, to change things and to see warnings. Nothing I've done has worked. ."

Tommy really didn't give a shit about his apology and useless ramblings, since it wasn't fucking helpful and Tommy was probably going to die of old age before they got to the part that was actually fucking useful.

“You’re just bein’ dramatic” Technoblade said flatly. “The book has several blank pages or ones that are only half full. We’ll get there.

“Not until I’m as old and frail as Phil,” Tommy whined.

“I’ll tell him you said that,” Technoblade said, glancing up from the page he’d been working on for three days.

“Do it, pussy. I’m not scared of him. I could take old bird bones in a fight.” Tommy proclaimed.

That probably wasn't really true, even if Tommy had a better shot at holding his own than he once had.

Arguments like that became normal too.

The days had fallen into a pattern of training in the mornings, sometimes with Technoblade and Tubbo, sometimes with just Tubbo, sometimes with Phil, if he was bored, then working on the book in the afternoons with Techno, until Phil or Tubbo dragged them out to do something else. Evenings were spent doing whatever they fucking wanted.

Of course, that didn’t count competition days. Their schedules seemed to be fucked, so that they always almost competed at the same time, but on some occasions, Technoblade competed when they didn’t, and... they went.

Not every time. Tommy hadn’t wanted to go the first couple times, and Phil hadn’t forced them, but Tubbo had wanted to go and-

Tommy had wanted to go to. Sure him. Technoblade was a good fucking fighter. It was entertaining to watch the PVP ok?

So, they went and Tommy cheered for Technoblade, screaming until his voice was hoarse as he demolished competitors, trying to out scream Tubbo beside him, while Phil cheered a little less enthusiastically. Thankfully PVP fans tended to be fucking nuts, so while he was loud, he wasn’t really louder than any of the other rabid fans.

Not that Technoblade needed to know that.

Phil and Tubbo had been sworn to secrecy, and since Technoblade hadn’t mocked him yet, so he counted that as a win. He was just there for the competition, fuck you.

Anyway, it also definitely didn’t feel like family dinner when they all went home and ate together afterwards, or when Phil bought them all sweet buns and when he let Phil ruffle his hair and Techno tried and forced him to do dishes.

Oh, fuck. That was a shitty ass lie even to himself. He’d always been a fucking sucker for the idea of family, even when it was far beyond him.

He’d fought it, on the daily, the idea that this was family. Technoblade obviously didn’t really think that way, not that they were family, but maybe on some level, he seemed to care or at

least maybe tolerate him for Phil sake but-

Tommy couldn't help it. Tommy was weak. He'd always been a fucking sucker for family. Wilbur had tempted him into it first when he was just a kid, and he'd followed Wilbur to the end with Tubbo's hand in his. He'd clung to every other family he'd ever had since then, from L'manburg to Techno to even fucking Dream for a time. He was needy, reliant, always had been and he'd hoped that maybe it would be different this time but-

He wasn't. Phil was... fuck Phil was better than he'd been since Tommy was a kid. Phil really seemed to care and maybe- just maybe he meant it. Or maybe Tommy was just a gullible fool, but he couldn't help it.

It wasn't perfect- he still missed Wilbur daily and worried about him and all the other people that he hadn't even met yet. He still messaged Wilbur every fucking day and Wilbur still didn't respond. He still woke up sometimes dreaming of Wilbur's blood on the stone or worse of Wilbur's ghost. sometimes Tommy swore he saw Wilbur in the crowds and only to realized it wasn't his stomach-wrenching uncomfortably when he realized it was a stranger, not his older brother. But for the first time in a long time, Tommy wasn't... he wasn't terrified.

Fuck, he wasn't scared of Phil anymore. Not in the way he had been. Now he was just scared Phil would change again. Because he could. People changed for no fucking reason and even though he was showing he cared, he knew... he knew that Phil could change. He would change for Techno or even Wilbur. Tommy would still come in last. A shitty little voice whispered that constantly and he wasn't sure if it was worse when it sounded like Dream or his own voice. And that was right. That was the correct thing, the right thing to think and it should be easy to listen to, Except-

Except some traitor part of his mind that sounded too much like Phil whispered otherwise.

Technoblade had finally built a second bed, but he still shared a room with Tubbo, though it made it far easier to slip out. He was debating heading to the roof again. He hadn't been out there since the first week, but it was a nice place. He personally did his best thinking in high places, and the roof was as high as he could get without issue. Or without worrying the others by going awol.

So he slipped out of bed, down the hall, and out the window like he had last time, swinging himself onto the roof with a grunt. The night air was warm, but not suffocating, and felt good on his skin, which seemed to itch with something. It might be fucking emotion.

"Fuck this," he grumbled as he rolled onto his back, staring up at the stars, dimmed by the Hypixel lights, but still glowing. "This emotional shit is for the fucking birds."

"Is that supposed to be an insult mate?"

Tommy definitely didn't scream, but he might have let out a tactical shout to disorient whatever enemy was attacking him on the roof. He definitely didn't almost fall off the roof. It was a tactical escape maneuver that was thwarted by the bastard out to get him.

“Ender fucking hell, Tommy, I didn’t mean to scare you that badly,” Phil said as he hauled Tommy back onto the flat part of the roof, with an iron grip on his arms. “Are you alright mate?”

Great. Phil, the last person he wanted to see.

“I’m fine,” Tommy grumbled, shaking Phil’s arm off of him. “You just fucking startled me, I wasn’t scared.”

“Right,” Phil said, and Tommy glared at him for the tone. “Well, what are you doing up here this late?”

“What are you doing? Aren’t you an old man that’s supposed to go to bed early?” Tommy snapped, a little more harshly than intended. Whatever.

“I’m an adult.” Phil corrected “which means I can go to bed whenever the fuck I want. Also, I’m not that old you little shit.”

“Whatever, you’re like halfway to death’s door by now, so I won’t make you spend your last hours arguing with me,” Tommy said haughtily.

Phil snorted, but let the banter die there, as silence settled over them for a moment. It wasn’t comfortable, but that probably had something to do with the fact that his heart was fucking jackrabbit pounding in his chest.

Before he could decide that he was just going to fuck off to bed again and have his crisis there, Phil spoke up again. “What are you doing up here Tommy?”

“I was coming up here to think and stuff. Big Man shit you wouldn’t understand.” Tommy said flippantly.

“Try me,” Phil said, which isn’t really what Tommy expected. Phil had backed way off and had rarely pushed Tommy about... anything since they’d gotten the book. It was relieving but annoying, waiting for the other shoe to drop. And it was dropping hard.

“I learned to sew, you know,” Tommy said, playing with the hem of his shirt. “When Wil and I were starting the whole L’Manburg thing he wanted uniforms. Took me a couple tries, but, uh I made them. I also repaired all of them. Mine, Tubbo’s Wilbur’s, everyone that had one, I would patch them up. It wasn’t always the prettiest shit, but I got better. Know what took me the longest to learn?”

“What?” Phil asked, tilting his head slightly.

“Fucking tying the thread off. I could make the shit but it all-the first ones just kept coming apart, no matter what I tried. I tried different stitches and knots, but it never fucking worked. It was horrible. Thought maybe I’d gotten defective fabric. Finally, though, I realized the problem wasn’t with how I was sewing it, or the fabric. It was the thread. The thread wasn’t strong enough. It couldn’t hold the fabric together, like pussy ass thread and-”

Tommy was dismayed to find that his throat was closing up. Fuck, why was he about to cry?

“The stupid thread didn’t hold shit together. It was just weak and useless and-”

“You aren’t talking about the thread are you?” Phil interrupted and Tommy couldn’t bear to look at him, even with the fucking kindness in his voice. That almost made it worse. “I’m not a reader like Techno, but I do understand metaphors, Tommy. You’re talking about yourself, aren’t you?”

“I was supposed to hold them together.” Tommy said, finally “Fuck, Phil, that was my job. Keep everything going when Wilbur didn’t have time. And I couldn’t. I could do shit. Over and over again I just fucked up and fucked up and the harder I tried the worse it got. It didn’t matter if I did the right thing or if I was trying to be bad, nothing ever worked out. I couldn’t keep anyone together.”

“Tommy,” Phil said softly. Too softly. Too fucking kindly and he hated it. He hated how he craved it. How he wanted to lean into and accept the comfort Phil’s voice offered. He fucking hated how much he wanted it.

“Stop” Tommy managed to get out around the lump in his throat “Just- please stop it. Fucking, stop.”

“What’s wrong.” Phil pressed “Tommy, mate, I’m trying here. I’ve been trying and I know that a few weeks can’t fix it, but what can I do to prove to you that- ”

“Stop caring.” Tommy burst out. “I fucking- I believe that you care. I didn’t think I’d be stupid enough to fall for it again. I thought that there was no fucking way that you’d-”

Tommy’s voice cracked and he scowled. “There was no way you’d be able to convince me, but I did. It would be easier if you hadn’t because I’ll fuck it up, Phil. I always end up fucking it up. And eventually, you’ll stop caring and it’ll be worse than if you’d never fucking cared at all.”

Phil’s hand landed gently on Tommy’s shoulder. “Listen, Tommy. I get that part of this is my fault. I own up to that. I wasn’t always a good dad, and I’m fucking horrified by what I did in the future, But Toms, things are different. You’ve made them different. I can’t change what happened the first time around, but Tommy, please. I’m doing everything I know how to do, and I’ll do it for as long as you need me to. But mate, you’ve gotta give it a chance. You’ve got to give us a real chance.”

“Phil-”

“Nope,” Phil said, getting to his feet. , cutting Tommy off. “You just need to think about it mate. I’m going back to bed. WE don’t have to talk about this in the morning or anything. And I’m not giving up on you Toms, not by a long shot, but just... consider what I said, yeah? And let me know if there’s anything I can do to help.”

With that, Phil dropped off the roof, swinging himself easily off the side and back through whatever window he’d come in through, leaving Tommy alone with more fucking emotions than he’d started with.

--

Two days later, when Tommy stumbled down the stairs after maybe two hours of restless sleep plagued by withers and laughing masks,, Phil was waiting and dressed. “Get your shoes on mate.” Phil said, “I’ve got a surprise for you.” Phil

Tommy allowed himself to be dragged along, concerningly unconcerned about where Phil was dragging him/ His excitement was evident and Tommy was sure that if Phil’s wings were covered by his coat, they’d be fluttering and jumping with excitement.

“Where are we going?” Tommy asked, for approximately the fifth time, mostly just to annoy Phil. Phil, unfortunately, seemed unperturbed by it, too excited to care. Fuck. “Are you fucking dragging me off to have me killed or something?”

“It’s a surprise, Tommy, I already told you,” Phil said, shaking his head.

“Killing me would be a fucking surprise old man,” Tommy retorted.

“Oh my ender, no Tommy.” Phil said “I’m not going to kill you, what the fuck. It’s a surprise. We’re almost there mate, just hold on.”

“Fine.” Tommy groaned “I guess I’ll be patient. In fact, I’ll be the most patient man you’ve ever met. Like one of those fucking monks, or whatever.”

“Uh-huh,” Phil said.

“And I’ll be known as TommyInnit, biggest fucking man, and most patient guy ever.” Tommy continued, mostly just to fill the silence because really Phil was too excited to talk and Tommy hated walking in the silence. “I’ll be famous,”

“Sure mate.”

“And I’ll be richer than all of you and then I’ll be so rich I can do whatever I want and buy a whole server just to pay the admins to leave me alone so that I can entirely terraform it with cobblestone.”

“Sounds like a pl- wait what the fuck?” Phil said, stopping short.

“I wanted to see if you were paying attention or not,” Tommy said with a shrug. “No one ignores TommyInnit.” That... okay that wasn’t technically true. People loved to ignore him, but Tommy was pretty fucking good at making himself be heard these days.

Phil snorted “That’s the truth. But lucky for you, Tommy, we are here. No need to be patient anymore.”

Tommy turned to look at the building Phil was pointing at, and his mouth might’ve fallen open a little. It was a store- a huge store- with several stories and giant windows that gleamed in the early morning light. More importantly, it appeared to be a clothing store.

“Why are we here?” Tommy asked, his voice managing to come out even, despite the excitement and hesitancy that curled in his gut.

“C’mon in with me..” Phil said in lieu of answer didn't wait for a response. Tommy followed after Phil, unable to tear his eyes away from the storefront.

Inside the store, it was even more impressive. It was a nice store, with clothes made of fabrics nicer than Tommy had ever worked with or owned. Sure, the clothes he wore now were probably of decent enough quality, but this store was in the champions district. It had hundreds of fabrics Tommy couldn't even name and all of them were nice.

“What the fuck.” Tommy mumbled.

“Good morning!” the man behind the counter greeted. His smile was a little stiff “How can I help the two of you today?”

“Hello.” Phil said with a smile “We’re here to get Tommy some new clothes today. His olds pens have seen better days and are the best suited to tournaments.

The man scanned both of them and pursed his lips. “I see. We’ll we’d be happy to help, however, please know that this store is a custom tailor store and our prices reflect such. There is a very nice store a few blocks away. If you meant to go there-”

“I’m well aware which store I came into mate.” Phil said, and Tommy could see the second his smile went from genuine to something icy. “I’ve heard this place has an excellent selection.”

The man’s face pinched as he looked over them. Phil was dressed casually. The most expensive thing on his was by far the emerald earring he was wearing, though that was hidden by his hair and long hair. The rest of his outfit was nice enough, but nothing fancy. The man's eyes settled on Tommy, who okay, so what is his shirt was a little bit stained- It had been washed by there was only so much you could do for it. And yeah his pants were a couple inches too short and were an older pair that Tommy himself and ended a couple times instead of bathing Phil or Techno for money to buy new clothes, but that didn't mean shit!

“Sir”, the worker started, sounding like a pretentious fucker.

“Arron.” A man snapped, as he entered the room, glowering “Get to the back. Now! “

“But-”

“Go. I will handle Philza Minecraft’s needs myself since you obviously won’t” The man snapped and Arron paled as he scurried behind the counter back into the back of the store

“Hey mate,” Phil said with a far more easy-going grin. “Don’t fire the poor kid for this. He’s a bit on an asshole, but in his defines, I did drag Tommy here out of bed a little early.”

“Fuck you Philza,” Tommy muttered. “I don’t look that bad.”

“Whatever you say, mate,” Phil said jovially and Tommy side-eyed a glare at him. “Now, like I was saying...”

--

A few hours later, Tommy had nicer clothes than he'd ever had before. Phil had helped him pick out fabrics and styles that would be best for fighting and for day to day use. Phil didn't protest, like he thought he might when Tommy insisted on several versions of his favorite shirt- it was his favorite for a reason. Phil made sure everything fit well and only picked those clothes that were comfortable. (well minus the one nice set of clothing that Phil insisted on, but Tommy couldn't argue too much, since even if it was fancy, it was more comfortable than anything else he'd owned, even the L'Marburg uniform.

It was... strange. Phil hadn't made Tommy pay for the clothes, and when Tommy protested that he'd just fucking grow out of them soon enough, Phil dismissed it. It was fucking bizarre. What was the point?

But... It was nice. Well. As nice as fucking clothes shopping could be.

Then Phil dragged him to lunch again before they split, and Phil claimed that he had more fucking errands to run, though Tommy had no idea what he could need to do. Training was better than going home and he needed a bit of space from fucking Technoblade and Phil and the emotions that... fuck he didn't want to deal with. So, a public training arena it was.

He got home a couple hours later, to find that not only had the new clothes been delivered, there was a package on the bed.

It was fabric. Just fabric. All the ones he'd eyed but hadn't been exactly practical, or that Tommy wouldn't even fucking know what to do with. Phil had... noticed.

And gotten them.

Tommy held the soft fabrics in his hands. He'd hesitate to guess how many yards it was. Tommy swallowed hard. What the fuck was he supposed to do with this? Did Phil expect him to make things with it because Tommy hadn't sewn in.. a long fucking time. He wasn't sure he even wanted to. He should just, fucking throw it away. He didn't need this. He didn't even want it. He stared at it for a moment, digging his nails into the fabric. He should-

Tommy shoved it under the bed.

Just in case.

--

Phil's words and Technoblade's words both rolled around in his head. It had been months since Technoblade's first proclamation that he wouldn't have to do this alone and Phil's constant reassurances. Everything together, culminating with the words Phil had said only a few days ago.

Trust them. Give them a chance.

Fuck.

He hesitated outside of Technoblade's door. Sure he'd turned to Technoblade in venerable moments. After nightmares and freakouts and any number of other things that he really wishes he hadn't. But then, then he hadn't had a choice. He was desperate and unwell and-

Now he had a choice. He could choose to walk away. It would be easy to slip into the streets of Hypixel and vanish, taking his shit and Tubbo with him and find a way to get into Dream's server anyway. He could do this alone.

He fucking could.

But.

Maybe he didn't want to.

Fuck this, he was a big man. He could trust. Because if he couldn't trust, if he couldn't then- then Dream would be right.

He steeled himself and knocked on Technoblade's door. For a split second there was silence, then shuffling, then the door creaked open to reveal Technoblade. He looked a little bleary-eyed and was wearing the clothes that Tommy had come or associate with Technoblade's house in Hypixel. With Technoblade working on the book or- with Technoblade being... a person. Tommy was glad he wasn't wearing his crown or cloak. That made this easier.

"Tommy?" Technoblade asked and... Tommy normally would dismiss that tone as sleepy or some shit, but Phil's annoying fucking words goaded him into giving it a chance. Maybe that was a note of concern. "Is everything alright?"

Tommy found that his throat was traitorously thick. "Yeah." He said "It's uh, fucking- my hair. It's annoying as shit, especially when I'm trying to fight and stuff. I was, uh, wondering if you could help. ."

Technoblade looked at him for a moment, expression entirely blank. That was enough for Tommy to start backpeddling "You don't have to." Tommy said, "I can teach myself or just have Phil show me how to pull it back into a ponytail or some shit but-"

"You want me to help you with your hair?" Technoblade asked, sounding almost incredulous.

Tommy scowled as something close to humiliation rose in his chest as he whirled around. Fuck it was a stupid idea "Fuck you Technoblade you don't have to be a bitch about it. I didn't want Tubbo to touch it but I can-"

"Wait, Tommy." Technoblade said, "I wasn't makin' fun of you. I was just surprised. I'll - I'll help you if you want it."

Tommy turned around slowly, hoping that his face wasn't as red as it felt. Technoblade mercifully didn't make Tommy respond "Come- come on in, Tommy, You can sit, just grab a seat on the floor if you want. I'll be right back- and don't touch my stuff."

Tommy flipped Technoblade off as he entered the room “I’ll touch whatever I want, bitch.”

Technoblade muttered something under his breath and Tommy couldn’t quite care as he sank to the ground by the desk chair. Tommy hadn’t even been in this room. It wasn’t that he wasn’t allowed- Technoblade had never said one way or the other but- fuck it felt off-limits. His room had been off-limits in the arctic, back on the DSMP, but here it seemed Technoblade didn’t have any real qualms about letting him in. It felt strange being in a space so personal to Technoblade, with large bookshelves, a beautiful desk, and weapons that he displayed on the walls by maps.

It was cozy though, with blankets and mugs, random strings and hair ties, and his cloak draped over his chair.

He returned a moment later and Tommy couldn’t help as his hands danced over the rug. He wasn’t- he wasn’t fucking nervous but it was strange as Technoblade settled behind him.

“It isn’t long enough to braid,” Technoblade said. “And Tommy, bruh, when was the last time you brushed it?” Technoblade had long, sharp nails, that Tommy had seen rip through skin when it came down to it, but they were gentle as they came through his admittedly tangled hair.

Tommy swallowed hard. He wasn’t scared. He wasn’t. It was almost worse that he wasn’t. “I brushed it this morning, bitch.” Tommy snapped, but the slight tremble in his voice was embarrassingly obvious. “Fuck you, not everyone can have naturally perfect hair.”

“Be built better.” Technoblade reprimanded lightly, and Tommy jabbed an elbow back, only connecting it with Techno’s shin. Technoblade laughed.

“Fuck you,” Tommy grumbled, even as he slumped back against Technoblade’s legs.

“Hmm, what about a trim? Cut off some of the dead ends, keep it out of your eyes, and.. I can do a little braid if you want?”

The offer was almost tentative, and remind him strongly of a night in a house that didn’t yet exist. That time though, Tommy had only let Technoblade do it because it was the symbol of togetherness. Because he was desperate for a place to belong and he’d bugged Techno about it until he caved and chose to braid it instead of shaving it off like Technoblade and threatened.

This time- this time Techno offered. This time Tommy wanted him to do it.

“That’s fine man. Just don’t make me look like a woman. Not that there’s anything wrong with being a woman, I love women, me, but-”

“I got it, Tommy,” Technoblade said, “Just, relax alright? I’m gettin’ the shears out now and I don’t wanna cut you. Well, at least not on accident.”

Tommy once would have jumped at the threat, at the idea of Technoblade holding a weapon so close to his neck.

He wasn't. Not really.

When had he stopped being scared?

He wasn't scared though as Technoblade snipped and tugged gently on his hair as golden pieces fell down around him. He hadn't had his hair cut like this since-

Huh. Wilbur had cut his hair during the war, gentle and good, and Niki had done it some when Wilbur was too busy during his presidency. During Pogtopia there hadn't been much time, and he'd gotten a few rough cuts from himself snipping the hair from his eyes, as Wilbur got less and less available to dit and hadn't dared ask Technoblade.

Then, everything went to shit, and then next time was-

Exile.

Dream had cut his hair, once, at the beginning. It had been- at the time it was supposed to be a reward but Tommy wasn't sure if it had been anymore. Because Dream had been rough. Kind with his words, but as he cut and hacked at Tommy's hair and it had hurt and been uneven, until Tommy had gotten a sword and hacked most of the rest of it off, at least somewhat even.

Of course when Dream saw that he'd been angry, so angry because Tommy had fucked up his hard work and his shit had been blown-

"Tommy?" He hadn't realized that Technoblade had stopped cutting his hair until he spoke. "Tommy, do you need me to stop?"

That's when Tommy realized he was breathing a little too hard to be sitting there doing jack shit. Fuck. "I'm a good big man," Tommy said and hoped that Technoblade would pretend that Tommy's voice wasn't shaking. "Just- a little, uh fuck I'm fine. Fuck you."

"If you say so," Technoblade said after a moment of silence, before resuming.

It was nothing like Dream, though, Tommy could tell if he focused. Dream wasn't so gentle and wasn't so methodical. Dream hadn't separated off a section and gently braiding it. Technoblade's hands were gentle with Tommy, in a way that Tommy hadn't let himself get familiar with. It was gentle and he focused on matching his breathing with the steady sound of Techno's, he began to relax.

Tommy hadn't realized how relaxing he was until Technoblade removed his hands. "It's done," Technoblade said softly, so quietly that if Tommy had been any sleepier, he'd probably not have heard it. It was enough to stir him back into full consciousness, and no his cheeks didn't fucking turn red, it was just unreasonably hot in Techno's room. That's it.

"Let me see." Tommy demanded, "Wanna make sure you didn't fuck it up."

Technoblade scoffed, but there was a clatter from behind him as Technoblade shifted and Tommy sat up straight again. "Here," Technoblade said, handing Tommy a small mirror. His hair was shorter, though it was still long enough to curl around his ears and at the base of his

neck. A single braid was tucked behind his right here, peeking out from under the side of his shaggy hair. It wasn't particularly obvious but...

"Thanks, Techno," Tommy muttered. "It's fucking- thanks."

Technoblade was quiet for a moment. "You're welcome, Tommy."

There was a moment of silence that perhaps would have been fucking emotional except "Now get out of my room before it starts smellin' like dirty child."

"Fuck you, I'm not a fucking child." Tommy said, tossing the mirror back at Technoblade, as he got to his feet. "I'm not fucking dirty. Your room is just too stuffy asshole."

"Bruh, my room is far cleaner than yours and Tubbo's." Technoblade protested, "You're the one dirtyin' it up in here."

"I've simply no idea what you could be talking about Technoblade," Tommy said loftily because it was much easier to do that than to actually address what had just happened. Emotions were fucking the worst and Tommy had definitely not experienced any tonight.

~~Phil definitely hadn't been right in any way.~~

--

Techno's PVP matches were great. He hadn't really gone to many of them, especially not at first but... well it was fun to watch. He'd been hesitant to go at first, but with Phil and Tubbo, cheering and the thrum of the crowd as Technoblade decimated his opponents, Then after when Technoblade was on a high they'd go eat, or they'd celebrate at home with buns and laughter and in those moments.... Tommy could, for just a second, almost forget. Of course, it still felt strange, without Wilbur there, still a little off-kilter, still a little wrong, but the pressure on his chest was less for a moment.

Of course, it was at one of those fucking PVP matches it all went to shit.

Realistically, Tommy should've been prepared for it. It was fucking stupid of him (imagine, him overlooking something like this, something so fucking obvious, ender he was just an idiot) to think that he would somehow avoid this.

Maybe it was the stupid fantasy he was living, pretending like things were real, like the tentative family that he'd crafted would be fine. Like it could last. Like it'd be okay.

Like Dream wasn't out there.

Dream.

He hadn't even seen him- he hadn't even been there. No, some bastard had just mentioned him. They'd been talking about Trchnoblade, saying that he wasn't really all that good (Tommy had been debating butting into their conversation because really, the PVP was nothing. They obviously were in the group of people that didn't realized that Technoblade

hadn't learned to PVP in an arena, but on a fucking battlefield) when one of them had scoffed "Yeah, that up and comer Dream could take him any day, easily"

And that was it.

Tommy's blood turned to ice in his veins and suddenly the crowd wasn't full of energy but was oppressive, a sea of faces that the bastard could be hiding anywhere in. The arena's tall walls weren't just walls, but were a prison, boxing him in like Dream had trapped him and Tubbo in.

He hadn't even bothered to explain anything to Tubbo or Hil before bolting. He had to fucking- fucking get away. Dream. Dream was on Hypixel. Dream was in the PVP tournament Dream was-

Tommy's breath hitched as he blindly pushed through the crowds, desperate to put as much space as possible between him and the PVP arena. Every glimpse of white or green only tunneled his vision further. Dream was on the server. Dream was on Hypixel.

He would know, wouldn't he? Dream would come for him because he had, he always had, he'd always be there. He'd always be hanging over him there, looming, waiting, watching, he'd never be free. He'd never-

Tommy pushed past people, ignoring the protests and the stares. He needed to fucking, fucking get out. He wasn't exactly sure where he was going, just moving, in any direction until his lungs burned from exertion and his legs started to ache.

Finally, as the crowds thinned, and the constant rumble from the competition arenas drained away did Tommy's mind begin to clear. The fog of pure panic lifted as he realized he had no fucking clue where he was.

Fuck. He was stupid. Tommy could feel the eyes of strangers on him and he swallowed hard. Not only had he freaked out for no good reason, but he'd also put on the biggest show ever. Dream wasn't here for him, but if he was-

He wasn't.

That didn't mean Tommy really wanted to stand in the middle of an open street, with the way his hair was prickling on the back of his neck.

So, he ducked into the next alley and slumped heavily against the wall, giving into his legs demands for rest. He slid down the side of the cool brick building, burying his head in his knees, that he'd pulled close to his chest. "Fuck." he said, slamming a fist against the cobble beneath him "I'm so fucking stupid."

Not only had he caused a scene, but the others were probably worried out of their enderdamned minds. Or. well. Tubbo was at least. Phil *probably* was and Technoblade would be worried because Phil was worried or something.

Fuck Technoblade was going to be pissed he pulled this. Phil too. Tubbo probably wouldn't let him out of his sight, the clingy bastard. Fuck he didn't want to explain this to them. Maybe he could convince them it was a new training routine? He wasn't exactly how to explain that reaction because really, he was just overreacting but they probably wouldn't let him just wave it off-

“Hey man, are, uh, you like, okay?”

Tommy's head snapped up because standing awkwardly at the edge of the alley was none other fucking Ranboo himself.

Chapter End Notes

1) I'm too tired to try and write a long note. Just, yell at me in the comments or tumblr if you want. go read my alien AU. Look out for another work in this series soon.

2) I hope you have a good night! be kind to yourself and others

everything you thought you knew

Chapter Summary

Ranboo+ Becrock bros

also if you saw me originally upload this chapter to the wrong fic,,, no you didn't <3 <3

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Technoblade was going to kill Tommy.

Well. No.

He wasn't going to do that. Murdering Tommy would not only be something that was counterproductive to everything he'd spent the last few months doing, but it had long lost its appeal. Most of its appeal anyway. No, Technoblade wanted to find Tommy, demand what the fuck he was thinking running away like that. Then not let him out of his sight for days, if only because that was likely the only way that Chat would shut up.

BrotherInnit

Technobro?

E

Find Tommy!

Missing Innit?

Why does he run so much?

Technosoft

Technoprotect

Leash kid

This is getting annoying, let's just put him in a collar

E

Blood

Technobro

Find him!

They were too loud. And it was... probably best he wasn't on the streets. They were still too crowded and Technoblade was getting a little too close to being irritated for comfort. No. He'd stay here and wait for the others to return. The soup was already on, because they'd all be hungry and Tommy was always more amicable after eating and Phil wouldn't want to cook when he got in.

They'd all come home, after Tommy had run, hoping he'd be there, but he wasn't. Initially they weren't going to look for him- Hypixel was a relatively safe server, especially if you didn't go too far, but Phil's pacing and Tubbo's chattering, on top of Chat's input was too much. He'd sent the other two out to get fresh bread, but in reality he was certain they were also looking for Tommy. He didn't care. He just needed them out of the house before their nerves infected him.

Tommy was going to be fine. Technoblade was going to go about his afternoon like normal and wait for him to come back, like a rational person. Tommy would be fine. He wouldn't leave the server. So, Technoblade made dinner.

He'd also already changed clothes, into something a little less flashy, but still useful. He hadn't taken his shoes off, but had lost the cape, crown, and mask to be more inconspicuous if he needed to go out. Fans weren't usually something he dealt with, but unfortunately, they'd been making a resurgence, and he was certain that he wasn't going to be in the mood to deal with the crazy fans who were stupid enough to approach him.

But, without any direction, he couldn't very well leave the house. And really, there would be no need.

Technoblade didn't expect Tommy to run. He'd thought they were past that. He thought that if he needed him that Tommy would-

Well. Technoblade thought wrong obviously.

Tommy wouldn't leave the server though./ Tommy wouldn't leave, because there was a chance Wilbur would be here. There was a chance of Wilbur and Tommy, if nothing else, wouldn't leave Wilbur. Or Tubbo. He might ditch Technoblade and Phil, even now, but he'd never leave Tubbo or the chance of finding Wilbur.

It'd be fine.

Technoblade had his communicator tucked safely in his pocket not because he was worried, exactly, but because if Tommy sent a message or if one of the others needed backup, he wanted to be available. To be ready. That's it.

Technoblade was a man of action- that's what people wanted from him, so he'd be ready to provide it if Phil needed him. Or Tommy.

Technoblade had expected a message from Phil or an update from Tubbo, even if they were slightly cryptic from Tubbo.

When it buzzed, he hadn't really expected it to be Tommy.

TommyInnit : iM fnIE. Cmning hmoe

"I'm gonna throttle him," Technoblade muttered quietly, even as he relayed the message to Phil and Tubbo so that they could get off the streets and come back with the now cold bread. It had really only been a couple of hours, but the sun was slipping towards the horizon and while mobs didn't spawn here Techno had to admit his instincts preferred that he and.... that those around him were inside at dark.

Technoblade's phone buzzed a few more times, though he didn't bother to look at them. It was probably just Phil and Tubbo asking questions he didn't have the answer to.

Technoblade checked the soup again, and put a fresh loaf of bread on the table. Tommy might not want to eat when he got in, but Phil had said that Tommy hadn't eaten since before lunch and even if he didn't want to eat, it'd be easier for the others.

At least... at least Tommy was coming back on his own. Technoblade sighed and finally let himself collapse into a chair. He'd come straight from the fight to find Tubbo taking a mile a minute, with no Phil or Tommy in sight. Instantly he'd assumed the worst- that somehow, somehow, the two of them were hurt or gone and the voices had crescendoed, already riding a high from the fight, before Technoblade's more rational brain had time to kick in.

Tubbo's initial explanation hadn't done much to assuage that and Technoblade had immediately set out, ignoring the usual figures who wanted him to immediately collect his coins and take stupid pictures.

None of that really mattered, when Chat was so loud.

Of course, the searching had been fruitless and he was pretty sure that he was going to have like, seven gray hairs because of this.

Maybe he could justify murdering Tommy just a little bit, in this case.

"Hey, dude, are you like, okay?" Ranboo asked again, taking a tentative step closer. His eyes were averted just to the left and Tommy dropped his own eyes, because it'd be fucking rude to try and force that eye contact and not at all pog.

Tommy also stopped gaping. Not that he was gaping to begin with, fuck off.

"I'm fine," Tommy snapped because even if this was Ranboo, he didn't get to look at him all concerned-like for no reason. Tommy had just had a minor freak out, that wasn't anyone's fucking business but his own. But, it was Ranboo, and, well, the enderhybrid had been nice enough. And-

Maybe, maybe Tommy had missed him.

Just a little.

So he followed that up with “Why do you ask?”

Ranboo looked a little out of his depth. “Uh, well, you’re kinda just... sitting in this random alley, looking like- er, well-”

“Looking like what?” Tommy demanded, jumping to his feet. Was Ranboo of all people insulting him? He wouldn’t stand for that. Any mental breakdowns Tommy had were his and his alone. Everyone else could fuck off.

Especially Ranboo.

Ranboo who Tommy wasn’t at all excited to see. Nope. Bitch was taller than him and that was just unfair.

“You looked a little upset! Alright!” Ranboo said, curling his shoulders up as if waiting for Tommy to fight him or something. Tommy would fight him, but not like this. That’d just be unfair. Tommy had forgotten that it had taken time for Ranboo to come out of his shell. “You were kinda, uh, sitting in my alley, and seemed to not be having such a good time,”

Tommy immediately wanted to argue, because fuck him but, Ranboo’s words stopped him short. “Your alley?” Tommy said, scowling “what, do you own the fucking alley mate? I don’t see your name on it anywhere!”

“You don’t even know my name,” Ranboo protested, but Tommy ignored him. He had often ignored Ranboo when it suited him.

He turned around and, no fucking way. There seemed to be a half-cobbled-together set of boxes and planks, creating a small half hut that Tommy would find cramped. Someone who was as freakishly tall as Ranbitch had to be miserable.

“You live here?” Tommy demanded “What the fuck man, that’s just sad,”

“Hey!” Ranboo protested weakly “It... It does its job. I can sleep in it and-”

“Bruh,” Tommy said, cutting him off. “This is ridiculous. You are literally living in a fucking alley!”

“I can’t help it!” Ranboo snapped, a sudden burst of anger taking both Ranboo and Tommy by surprise if Ranboo’s immediate flinch was anything to go by.

“And since I got fired today because I’m just *stupid*,” Ranboo continued, more than a little self-deprecating “I don’t see this changing any time soon,”

Oh and *that* wouldn’t do. Tommy had many, many hobbies, all sorts of Big Man things that were wonderful. But, his favorite hobby tended to be fucking with assholes, by being an asshole. And Ranboo had presented the perfect opportunity to do just a bit of that.

Besides, he needed a bit of a distraction to burn off his extra energy, since his hands were shaking. With the energy of chaos, of course, not emotions, or anything.

“Fuck those bastards. Nasty capitalists they are” Tommy proclaimed, though he himself didn’t really give a shit about capitalism. People like Techno and Wilbur *loved* to talk about it though “Let’s go stick it to the fucking man, Ranboo,”

Tommy grabbed Ranboo’s arm and tugged him behind him, ignoring his weak protests and also ignoring the fact that he probably shouldn’t know Ranboo’s name yet.

The chaos was going to be *wonderful* .

“Uh, hey. Uh, Tommy wasn’t it?” Ranboo piped up a little timidly from behind Tommy “Where are we going?”

Ranboo, just as Tommy remembered, was easily convinced to come with him. It had only taken an hour and a little bit of bonding, where Tommy stood up for Ranboo after he got fired, and then stole a little from said former employers, and then perhaps did a bit of running because of the very minor crime. The usual bonding methods, as one does.

(Tommy also wasn't stupid. He knew good and well that is eerily mirrored the first time Tommy had met Ranboo. Or would? Would've? Whatever, fucking time travel. At least Dream wasn't around to be a bitch this time and Tommy could simply ride the adrenaline high.)

In the end, though, it was rather easy to convince Ranboo to come with him. Crime was the best vehicle for bonding, in his opinion.

“You’ll see big man,” Tommy said. Okay, so maybe he hadn’t told Ranboo exactly where they were going. It would be kinda weird, right, to just announce that he was taking him back to his house. Oh well. Ranboo was too fucking easy to convince anyway. This time it would be a surprise. He wasn’t fucking leaving Ranboo in an alley. No way.

“That is not comforting,” Ranboo said dryly.

“Don’t you trust me, Ranboob?” Tommy asked, only half-joking.

Ranboo made a noise in the back of his throat that was somewhere between a whine and an enderman growl. It never failed to make the hair on his neck stand up. “Tommy, please don’t call me that. And no. I don’t really trust you yet. I’ve only known you like, an hour,”

“And?” Tommy said “Boob boy, we have a connection, don’t you feel it?”

“I only feel crippling anxiety,” Ranboo deadpanned and Tommy barked a laugh.

“I wasn’t kidding,” Ranboo protested weakly “Tommy I don’t know-”

"It'll be fine, Ranboo," Tommy said dismissively "I've got everything under control. Just follow my lead big Man,"

"That- this isn't reassuring Tommy," Ranboo hissed and Tommy tolled his eyes. Oh Ranboo, always too big of a worrywart. It was a bit annoying to be honest. "For all I know you could be trying to kill me!"

"My man," Tommy said "If I wanted to kill you we'd have to leave the server entirely, dumbass,"

"Oh. Right," Ranboo said "Forgot,"

"Yeah, you do have a shit memory," Tommy agreed. "That's why you carry that book around, innit?"

"Hey!" Ranboo protested, then frowned "Wait- how did you know about the book?"

"It literally says 'Ranboo's Memory Book' on it," Tommy said "And you've been holding it for the entire fucking walk. I'm not an idiot,"

"That's... okay, fair enough," Ranboo said and Tommy grinned triumphantly, "This still does not make me any less worried,"

"It'll be fine, Ranboo," Tommy said for like the fiftieth time. "Also, quick question, do, by chance, happen to know how to read enchanting table?"

"Why would I- no, I can't read enchanting table." Ranboo said with a frown. "Who would know how to do that?"

"I was just asking, big man," Tommy said with a shrug. That was disappointing, but it was too late to just ditch Ranboo now. That would be incredibly rude and not poggers of him. "No need to get so defensive, bitch,"

Ranboo let out a longsuffering sigh that brought Tommy an inordinate amount of joy.

"I do not trust you. I think this counts as a kidnapping," Ranboo said flatly after a moment of silence.

"I am no low-life Kidnapper," Tommy protested, putting a hand over his heart "I am a big man, and I do not stoop to thins like kidnapping, fuck you. Besides, you're coming of your own free will dickface,"

"I don't really think I am-"

"Nah, I'm not like, threatening you am I?" Tommy interrupted. Ranboo was just too dramatic. A little coercion never hurt anyone.

"I don't even know anymore," Ranboo admitted.

Tommy sighed "Fine if I tell you where we're going, will you stop bitching about it?"

“Uh, maybe?” Ranboo said, “If we’re going like, somewhere terrible I’ll probably not be happy but-”

“We’re going somewhere where those fuckers you called bosses won’t come for us later,” Tommy said “Safe bed, food, all that good shit. It’s a good place for us to crash,”

Ranboo relaxed slightly for a moment. “Oh. Okay,”

“We’re also there, anyway,” Tommy said. Ranboo had bitched the whole way there, somehow, and it was fucking annoying. Shit, is this how Technoblade felt? He did not want to feel like the Blade, thanks. Apparently, he’d been so focused on whining he hadn’t even noticed Tommy came to a stop.

“What?” Ranboo said, eyes blowing wide as he frantically looked around “Tommy, we are in the champion village!”

“Yeah and bitch?” Tommy said as he opened Techno’s gate, striding toward the door. Ranboo hesitated behind him, but Tommy knew it would only take the lanky asshole a few strides to catch up. “C’mon,”

He swung the door open, without hesitation and grinned when he heard Ranboo scurrying to catch up behind him. “Tommy, are we breaking in?” He hissed, even though Tommy had literally just opened the door, that wasn’t even locked. He was a little offended that Ranboo thought that Tommy would break in so terribly. He was a much better criminal, thank you very much.

“I’m not breaking in,” Tommy snapped “What the fuck, why would you assume that?”

“You aren’t a champion!” Ranboo hissed “Or at least, I don’t think you are?”

“I’m not but it’s fine,” Tommy said, waving his hand.

Ranboo paled and his eyes shifted over Tommy’s shoulder. “Oh Ender,” Ranboo muttered.

Tommy logically knew that Technoblade was in the house. It was fucking Technoblade’s house. However, he had not quite considered that Technoblade might be a little pissed off at him since he had vanished for the better part of several hours.

It was a slight miscalculation but he was pog enough that it didn’t matter.

“Hey, Technoblade!” Tommy exclaimed, turning around to face Techno, who was glaring down at him. “How are you on this lovely evening?”

“Tommy,” Technoblade said. His eyes were closed. Not a good sign. Fuck. “Where have you been? And why is there a six-and-a-half-foot-tall stranger in my house?”

“Fuck you bitch-” Tommy started, because it really wasn’t Technoblade’s business where he’d been, and so what is tEchno owned the house. Tommy lived here too!

"I'm so sorry," Ranboo cut in, sounding a little panicked. "Tommy- I don't really know what's going on. Or why I'm here. Or where I am exactly,"

Technoblade's eye flew open before leveling a glare at Tommy that... perhaps once it would've scared Tommy. He wasn't really scared (not that Tommy got scared, that was pussy shit and he simply wasn't a pussy.) just... perhaps a bit aware of his surroundings. The good old fight or flight if you will.

"Did you kidnap him?" Technoblade demanded, "Did you kidnap this- what's your name?"

"Uh, Ranboo?" Ranboo said hesitatingly.

"Did you kidnap Ranboo?" Technoblade asked again, glaring down at Tommy, who easily met his glare. TommyInnit didn't lose staring contests. "And bring him to *my* house?"

"I didn't kidnap him!" Tommy exclaimed "Ranboo is my new best bud. He came here entirely of his own free will after I rescued him from his fucked up former employers,"

"You stole from them and almost got us arrested," Ranboo interjected. Tommy ignored him. Those were minor details.

"Of course he did," Technoblade grumbled "You better not have let the cops here Tommy, cause I'm not gonna bail you out of jail,"

"Nah, you'd break me out. Besides, Hypixel doesn't even have a jail, dumbass," Tommy said. "And I'm simply too good for those idiots to follow me. Big crime man Tommy Innit,"

"Bruh, that's not even true. I had to bail you and Tubbo out of trouble at the market back on that other server," Technoblade said "And also, you get caught all the time."

"That is not true. That is simply lies and slander and I will not stand for it. Ranboo, back me up,"

"I don't know what's going on here," Ranboo said, sounding somewhat distant. "I-I'm not sure I should be weighing in,"

"Tommy, that is the voice of someone who got kidnapped," Technoblade said gesturing to Ranboo, who startled at the sudden gesture "Look at him, he's confused,"

Tommy rolled his eyes "Ranboo is always confused, that's his normal state. He's fine,"

"Hey, uh, Mr. uh, Blade? Sir?" Ranboo piped up "Are we allowed to be here?"

"Of course we're allowed to be here," Tommy cut in "Technoblade is my *brother* ,"

Tommy's brain took a moment to catch up to what his stupid fucking mouth had said and he blanched. Oh shit.

Panic really was rising in his chest as his eyes snapped to Technoblade who was frozen, face completely and utterly blank. Fuck. He hadn't meant to- Tommy- he didn't even know where

that had come from.

Well maybe he didn't but he didn't think it would just slip out like that.

The door slammed open, however, as the gods finally took pity on Tommy for once in his fucking life, and he was saved from the rest of that situation. Ranboo jumped and made a noise of panic as Tubbo sprinted across the room.

"You!" Tubbo shouted, slamming into Tommy hard enough that they tumbled to the floor "You're a right asshole Tommy Innit!"

Tubbo was practically pinning him to the ground, with a knee driven painfully into Tommy's chest. "What the fuck?" Tommy protested, with a wheeze. Tubbo didn't look heavy but his knees were sharp and he was stronger than he looked. "*Philll*, help me," Tommy whined, resolutely not looking in Technoblade's direction. If he ignored the problem it wasn't there.

"You brought this on yourself mate," Phil said, sounding... well he sounded amused but Tommy was pretty sure that he was also relieved. It still felt a little odd to see it directed at him "You gave us a fucking heart attack, running off like that. What were you even doing?"

"Big man stuff," Tommy said, coughing as Tubbo somehow pressed his knee in harder. Fuck that hurt. "You wouldn't understand- shit Tubbo get off!"

"He was kidnappin' someone," Technoblade interrupted, and Tommy flinched at the tone. It wasn't entirely flat but there was a current of something in it that left Tommy on edge.

"Oh, I was wondering who that was," Phil said, nodding his head toward Ranboo, who apparently thought he could hide by slouching down even further.

"Who?" Tubbo asked, and he finally got distracted enough for Tommy to throw him off.

"Fuck you," Tubbo snapped as he slid onto his back without a fight. Tommy thought he looked rather like a cat.

"He's talking about Ranboo. My friend who doesn't sit on my chest and berate me for no reason, like a dickface," Tommy said, pointing at Ranboo.

"Uh, hi?" Ranboo said, waving awkwardly. What a loser. Tommy took back every nice thing he said about Ranboo

"Hey mate," Phil said, smiling all kinda and shit, like Ranboo was a wild animal. Tommy recognized that smile because Phil had used it on him many times before. "You alright over there?"

"Yes? No? I don't-I'm not sure, actually. I'm still very confused," Ranboo said "I don't think I was kidnapped? I didn't exactly protest coming. But I didn't expect to end up, well, uh, here. I'm really sorry if I'm imposing-

"We've discussed this, I didn't kidnap you," Tommy said, cutting Ranboo off. "Also, there was absolutely no way I was going to let you sleep in a fucking alleyway,"

And, that was all Tommy needed to do to ensure Ranboo wouldn't be going anywhere. If you watched close enough Tommy was pretty sure that you could see the pieces click in Phil's mind. If his wings were out Tommy was pretty sure they'd be all fluffed up, like a cat's.

"You were sleeping in an alley?" Phil asked. His voice was still gentle but Tommy could literally see the stress in his smile. He doubted that Ranboo could, but everyone else in the room knew what Tommy had done.

Tommy hoisted himself to his feet. Tubbo tried to go for the backs of his knees, but Tommy, with his brilliant mind, anticipated that move and dodged, much to Tubbo's disappointment.

"An alley?" Technoblade echoed "Bruh that's just sad," Tommy was still resolutely ignoring him,

Ranboo, if possible, seemed to shrink in on himself more. "Well, yeah, but! It's not that bad! It doesn't really rain here, and I had several cardboard boxes stacked together. I haven't lived here that long so it wouldn't have lasted that long. So it's fine!"

"Mate," Phil said, sounding horrified. Tommy was glad that for once, all those things weren't directed at him. "That's not fine. How old are you even?"

Ranboo's tail twitched nervously behind him. "Uh, see, the thing is, I don't exactly know? I'm like... fifteen? Maybe?"

"He's got a shit memory," Tommy interrupted "Has to write all that shit down in his book,"

"I was living in a box when Phil found me!" Tubbo piped up, ignoring Tommy's comment as he scampered over to Ranboo, peering up at him curiously. "I got locked out of the house for a few days when I was like six! Box bros!"

Phil laughed, though it sounded a little strangled. "Tubbo, mate that's- that's not something you should be laughing at,"

"It's funny though.:" Tubbo whined.

"Wait, who leaves a six-year-old in a box," Ranboo asked, sounding horrified.

"Who lets a fifteen-year-old sleep in a box in an alley?" Tommy shot back. "I mean come on boobboy, it's-"

"Alright," Phil said, clapping his hands loud enough that Ranboo flinched,) Tommy definitely did not, thanks.) "Tommy, Tubbo, thank you for your input, but I think maybe I should have a chat with Ranboo for a moment, so why don't you go with Technoblade- "

"No!" Tommy exclaimed, perhaps a little too quickly. He wasn't scared to go with Techno. Obviously. But, he needed to make sure that Phil didn't just let Ranboo leave! That was it! He definitely didn't want to avoid Technoblade. That would be pussy shit.

Everyone was looking at him like he was crazy. Fuck he needed a recovery. "No,, no I should be here. Make sure Ranboo isn't uncomfortable. You can be a very intimidating man.

Philza,"

"You know what, I think that Tubbo and I should go," Technoblade cut in, and though his tone was still even, it was obvious he was searching for excuses. "Tommy made this mess and he should us clean it up. Tubbo and I will- uh- dinner's ready,"

Tommy definitely wasn't hurt by the speed at which Technoblade practically ran out of the room, with a confused Tubbo trailing behind him. It was Tommy's own fault and Technoblade was probably only holding off on the whole murder and/or relentless mocking because there was a stranger in his house and he was probably more upset about that.

"Alright then," Phil said, after a moment. "That happened. Anyway, Ranboo, mate, please ignore Tommy and his bullshit,"

"Hey!" Tommy interjected, but Phil ignored him and he scowled, crossing his arms.

"Ignore him," Phil continued "Sorry mate, you look a bit overwhelmed. Are you alright?"

"I don't know," Ranboo repeated. "I don't...I think I'm just a little confused by what's going on,"

"It's alright mate," Phil said with a gentle smile "Tommy has that effect on people. But I think he was just concerned about you living in the alley,"

Phil's eyes cut to Tommy. Tommy had to admit he wasn't the one who normally picked up strays. He left that up to Phil and Wilbur, but Ranboo wasn't a stray even if he didn't know it yet. "Yep. Besides, we've committed crimes together, so we're bonded and shit. Besides, it's like I saw the future and knew that Ranboo was going to be poggers. Not as good as me or Tubbo, but better than Techno, the bitch,"

Phil's eyes widened minutely. Finally, he'd figured it out..

"I was fine, really," Ranboo insisted "The alley was fine, and it was just until I could get on my feet, so really, I can just. Go. Find another one. I don't mean to impose or cause problems or-"

"Nope," Phil said firmly "You're absolutely not sleeping on the street, that's just fucking sad. No, we'll get you a room at one of the local inns for now. Techno sure as fuck won't miss the money,"

"I couldn't" Ranboo said, shaking his hands. "Really, you shouldn't spend the money, you don't even know me, and, uh, Technoblade didn't seem exactly happy to have me here"

"Stay here then," Tommy said because Ranboo would easily cave to direct orders "Techno can fuck off. We've got plenty of room since he literally owns another house. We won't be spending money or any of that bullshit you're on about,"

Ranboo still didn't look convinced. "Are you guys sure? I mean... I'm basically a stranger,"

"I trust Tommy's judgment" Phil said, and before Tommy could even begin to take advantage of that statement he followed it with "Most of the time anyway. Now, if you really want to leave, you're more than welcome to, but I know that I'd rest easier knowing you weren't sleeping on the fucking street,"

Ranboo gaped for a moment before nodding. "Alright. Alright. I guess I can, uh, stay here a few nights. Just until I get a new job though!"

"Of course," Phil said and Tommy was pretty sure that was a lie. He knew that look. Tommy couldn't complain. "Now come on, you must be hungry and I think I heard Techno say that he had dinner ready. Just go straight through that door and we'll be behind you in a sec,"

Ranboo nodded, a bit stupidly in Tommy's opinion. He might still be in some form of shock.

After he left, Phil rounded on Tommy and Tommy repressed a flinch. Phil didn't look angry, but Tommy had run off and then come back with an entirely new person, with no warning. He probably wasn't happy-

"Are you alright?" Phil asked, taking a step closer.

Tommy was surprised enough that he didn't take a step back. "I'm fucking fantastic," Tommy boasted because really, he was over the bullshit he'd been freaking out about earlier. It had been stupid and there was no point in indulging it. "You should be more concerned about Ranboo. Bitch was sleeping in a fucking alleyway. And he's allergic to water, so if it ever rained here he'd be fucked,"

"He's allergic to water? So he is an enderman hybrid?" Phil said, eyes widening "I didn't want to assume- "

"Nope, he's half enderman, half.... Something," Tommy said "Never did figure it out. He's a bit of a bitch, but Ranboo... he's not too much of a wrongun,"

Phil laughed, shaking his head. He looked like he wanted to say something else, for a moment, and Tommy thought he might push the issue of him running off. But, Phil then offered a smile instead.

"C'mon mate, let's eat,"

Tommy was pretty sure the conversation wasn't over, but at least he had the chance to put it off for as long as possible now. Maybe Phil would forget about it.

--

Ranboo ended up taking the bedroom Tommy and Tubbo normally shared. There were two beds now, but they didn't want to crowd him, so they both took a few blankets and pillows and slept in the office with all of Tommy's notes.

"Why did you run?" Tubbo asked quietly, in the dark of the room. Through the curtains, he could see the lanterns that they'd hung on the streets.

Tommy could've pretended to be asleep, but... he felt bad. Tubbo had been worried, even if he'd tried to beat the shit out of Tommy for it. "It... I needed some space," Tommy replied, finally. "My head is... it's still all fucked up and shit. I thought I was over that bullshit, but my brain just fucking reacted and there were just too many people there. I need space"

Tubbo was quiet for so long Tommy thought he'd fallen asleep. "Next time just- fucking take me with you. Or tell us. Phil's old heart can't handle the stress,"

Tommy couldn't help but laugh at that. "I'll keep it in mind, big man."

"Boys, you're going to be late!" Phil called from the bottom of the steps. The one issue with the boys moving out (even though they still spent most of their time in Techno's house) was that Phil couldn't make them get up on time. The house next door that Technoblade owned had been easily cleaned up so that they could move in. There wasn't enough space for each of them to have a bedroom since the house was smaller, but each room had two twin beds so Phil let them figure it out.

Of course, they insisted they were too old for Phil to wake them up, and Phil supposed that in Tommy's case, he might really be.

"We're coming!" Tubbo shouted from somewhere upstairs, and a moment later he and Tommy thundered down the steps, pushing and shoving each other as they did so.

"Give me my shoe!" Tommy exclaimed, reaching for the shoe Tubbo had in his left hand.

"Not until you apologize for eating all my honey melts!" Tubbo cried.

"I didn't fucking eat them!" Tommy crowed, as he lunged for the shoe.

"You did too!" Tubo exclaimed, spring out of the way so that Tommy fell against the railing. "Apologize bitch!"

"Tubbo," Phil said, and it was just enough of a distraction that Tommy was able to snatch the shoe out of his hand.

"Hey!" Tubbo exclaimed "Not fair! *Phlllll*"

"You were holding his shoe hostage," Phil said, barely stifling a laugh "But, Tommy apologize,"

"I didn't fucking eat them!" Tommy exclaimed "But fine, sorry, whatever,"

"That wasn't so hard, was it?" Tubbo asked and Phil snorted at the glower Tommy shot his way.

"Well, regardless, you two won't get to compete today if you don't hurry it up," Phil reminded them "And it's a championship qualifier round,"

Phil's smile grew as Tommy's face lit up. He still had no idea what had caused the reaction the other day, but he'd bounced back quickly and with the addition of Ranboo, it had been hard to get Tommy alone. It had only been a day or so, but still.

Phil had no doubt that it was purposeful.

"Fuck yeah! We're going to the championships Tubbo!" Tommy cried, slinging an arm around Tubbo, previous squabble immediately forgotten.

"We sure are big man," Tubbo agreed, ramming an elbow into Tommy's side.

"You won't be if we don't leave now," Phil warned, he glanced to the top of the steps, where Ranboo was hovering nervously. Phil's smile didn't falter, but his heart twisted. Poor kid was overwhelmed. "Ranboo, you coming?"

Ranboo blinked, obviously surprised "I... I didn't know if I was, uh invited,"

"Don't be an idiot, of course, you are," Tubbo cut in. "I thought you were my friend, Ranboo, if you don't go I'll simply die. It'll be the betrayal of the highest order,"

"You don't have to go," Phil said, ignoring Ranboo "But we'd be happy to have you. If that dramatic little shit didn't make it obvious,"

"Oh-uh- if you're sure I'm not going to be imposing-"

"Come on bitch boy," Tommy said, rolling his eyes "Just shut up and come! It'll be fun! You get to see me and Tubbo kick ass,"

He didn't give Ranboo a chance to answer before he was pulling Tubbo out the door, shouting about how they were going to be late.

Ranboo was still frozen at the top of the steps as if he wasn't sure of what had happened. "C'mon mate," Phil said, waving him down the steps "They'll be upset if you aren't there after it's over,"

"Tubbo would probably throw a fit," Ranboo agreed, glancing at Phil hesitantly "try to, uh, take my knee caps? He really seems to like that threat,"

Phil laughed "Yeah, Tubbo says that sometimes. He hasn't actually tried to take anyone's yet, so I think you're safe mate,"

Phil ushered Ranboo out the door- Tommy and Tubbo were probably halfway there already, but that was fine. They wouldn't see the two of them until after the round was over anyway.

Ranboo hummed "Well, to be fair, I don't think Tubbo could even reach my knees,"

Phil cackled "That's a good point. You could probably just, step over him,"

Ranboo's eyes, one green, and one red lit up "Oh, I'm going to have to try that later! He'll be so mad if I just step over him,"

The match was an all-around success. Tommy and Tubbo were the crowd favorites, having made a name for themselves pretty quickly in certain circuits. Since they'd never completed in a championship before, they were with a group of other relative newbies, who they took out with ease.

Somehow they managed to get red- Tommy always proclaimed it was his lucky color, even when Tubbo protested- and it made them easy to track across the map.

Only one team, the green team gave them any trouble- they'd gone for the defense strategy, and kept shooting Tubbo off the bridge he was using to get to them. They hadn't realized what Tommy was doing though, which was gathering enough emeralds to purchase two enderpearls. Once they made it past the defenses, Tommy easily held them off while Tubbo mined through the defenses. They were much better at long shots than up close PVP.

Not only was the match entertaining, but Ranboo was fucking hilarious. The longer they sat together, the more relaxed he came and Phil got why Tommy and Tubbo liked him. His running commentary was never over the line, like Tommy's or quite as bizarre as Tubbo's but it was still wildly entertaining.

"I mean come on, they could've at least tried to stab Tommy! They kept trying to shoot him! I've literally seen skeletons with better aim than that," Ranboo said, pointing at the team that was about to be obliterated. Tubbo had just broken the bed and somehow they were still trying to shoot at Tommy.

"Yeah, I mean c'mon, a bow is my weapon of choice, but even I don't use it that often in close combat!" Phil agreed. Tommy obliterated one of them with a single hit and a moment later the other was down too.

Phil jumped to his feet, cheering with the crowd around them shouting as Tommy and Tubbo were transported briefly to the winner's platform. Ranboo was shouting beside him, cheering and waving as if they could see him.

While the crowd was still cheering, Phil ushered Ranboo down out of the stands. He flashed his pass he'd been gifted from Technoblade practically guaranteed access anywhere, and dragged Ranboo by. The workers didn't really care if Ranboo didn't have a pass when the pass Phil had was approved by Technoblade. Phil didn't like flaunting names and reputations, but sometimes, it was certainly convenient.

Tommy bounded up to them as soon as they were in the exit lobby, practically vibrating with excitement. His blue eyes were glittering and he was grinning enough that Phil thought his face might split. "We won! We fucking- Phil did you see it? We crushed them,"

Phil hadn't seen Tommy this excited in a long time. He was more excited than when they'd won their first one. "I did!" Phil exclaimed, grinning broadly, as he wrapped an arm around Tommy's shoulders, almost without thinking. It was a testament to his excitement that Tommy didn't immediately stiffen and pull away. Phil released him though. No sense in pushing his luck "It was brilliant mate, you two were amazing!"

Tommy puffed up, "Of course we did! We're the biggest men. There was no doubt in my mind we'd crush them like the peasants they are,"

Phil didn't miss the way Tommy's eyes slid by them, briefly searching the crowd before settling back on Phil, a little dimmer than before.

"Sorry mate, Techno had a meeting come up," Phil said. He wasn't sure that was the truth, but it was at least that Technoblade had told him. Phil had tried to press the subject and ended up with Technoblade making some vague jokes and vanishing out the door before Phil got a real answer. "He didn't have time to make it here before it started,"

"I didn't say anything about Technoblade," Tommy snapped "I don't care if the bitch isn't here or not. He's probably back luck anyway,"

"Alright mate," Phil said, raising his hands "Never mind. Are you hungry? You didn't come over to our side this morning so I'm assuming you haven't eaten anything yet,"

"I'm hungry!" Tubbo called. He'd headed straight for Ranboo, and appeared to be hanging off his arm. Ranboo was holding him a few inches off the ground and must be stronger than he looked to be able to do that. Tubbo was small but heavy. Phil knew that from experience.

"Alright, let's go then," Phil said "I took some coins from Techno's stash this morning, so whatever you two want, on him,"

"Isn't that, like, stealing?" Ranboo asked, grimacing as Tubbo dropped off his arm, but chose to climb onto his back immediately.

"Eh," Phil said with a shrug "I suppose, but he won't mind. He pretty much gave me free rein of his money,"

"Me too!" Tommy exclaimed

"No he didn't," Phil said with a laugh "Absolutely not. That'd be actually stealing you little shit,"

"Okay, but would you rather us steal from TEchno or some random vendor?" Tubbo pressed, leaning dangerously "Hmm Philza?"

"How about neither?" Phil said "You make plenty of coins from Bedwars and if you need more all you have to do is ask. The same goes for you Ranboo. If you ever need money, just ask,"

"Oh, uh thank you? I really couldn't- oh crap!" Ranboo pitched forward as Tubbo shifted his weight back dramatically.

"Tubbo, get off of him," Phil admonished. Poor Ranboo wasn't going to stand up for himself. "Ranboo just fucking drop him if you want,"

"Oh, no it's fine," Ranboo said "Really,"

"Ranboo's too much of a bitch to stand up for himself," Tommy said in a stage whisper. "No backbone, that one,"

"Hey!" Ranboo protested. "Okay, I'm not going to stand for that,"

"What are you going to do about it bitch boy?" Tommy taunted.

"I'm-I'm- hey!" Ranboo cried as Tubbo poked at one of his horns, distracting him from Tommy's insults. Though, Phil knew that wasn't really an insult. It was as close to affection as Tommy got sometimes.

"Boys," Phil said, though he couldn't bring himself to be too mad. Seeing Tommy just act like himself again was a relief. "Stop harassing him,"

Tommy didn't even pretend to consider it. "Nah,"

Tubbo didn't respond, but honestly, it was more concerning when he was quiet than when he wasn't. "Sorry mate," Phil said apologetically "I did what I could. It's up to you now,"

"Thanks," Ranboo said flatly. "I guess this is just my life now.."

Yeah, Ranboo was going to fit right in.

--

Ranboo hadn't left.

Technoblade had resigned himself to that fact when Tommy mentioned that Ranboo had been sleeping in an alley. It was Phil. There wasn't much else to say about it.

Tommy had really gone for the throat and had sealed the deal by basically telling him that he was an important figure from Tommy's future, according to Phil.

He didn't seem like a bad kid- just painfully shy at times and a little awkward. Technoblade could relate to that. It didn't mean he wanted another person in his house. Houses, he supposed, because Tommy, Ranboo, and Tubbo had commandeered his other house so that everyone had more room.

He was also pretty sure that Tommy was avoiding him.

Not that he could blame him.

Techno hadn't exactly... well, Tommy had called Technoblade his brother.

See, the problem was, Tommy hadn't meant it. There was no way he could have meant it, or, at least he'd regretted saying it. The second he'd said it Technoblade had watched the regret, fear, and panic flash through Tommy's eyes.

Technoblade wasn't Tommy's brother-that was Wilbur's role. Tommy had just slipped up and regretted it.

Technoblade would regret having himself as a brother too. He'd never been particularly good at it and what did Tommy get? Resources, sure, protection, yeah. And really Technoblade knew that's all Tommy could get from him. That's all most people got from him. Phil was different, but he was Phil.

Technoblade certainly wasn't brother material and Tommy already regretted calling him that. It was obvious. Technoblade wasn't hurt by it, because there was nothing to be hurt about. Tommy had just- he'd misspoken. It was the easiest way to explain the situation, and why Technoblade hadn't immediately kicked them out. It was nothing more, and Technoblade wasn't upset.

No matter what Chat said.

Tommy needed to know that it was fine- that- that Technoblade knew he didn't mean it. That it was an honest mistake.

Tommy couldn't avoid him forever. Technoblade had finally been making progress with Tommy, so that they could at least peacefully (well, peaceful in terms of Tommy) work together and he wasn't about to let any feelings he definitely didn't have about that situation get in the way.

Besides, the book wasn't getting translated any faster and Technoblade was itching to get back to it. It had been two days, Ranboo had had time to settle and the new schedule for competitions would be out soon. They needed to work on it before then.

So, he'd practically dragged Tommy upstairs while Phil was attempting to teach Tubbo and Ranboo a card game. From what little bits he gathered, Tubbo was cheating and trying to team up with Ranboo, who was alternating between cheating and playing fairly, based on whoever was giving him more pressure.

"I'm tired," Tommy whined, even though it was barely seven pm, and the sun had yet to set on Hypixel. "This is so fucking rude, depriving a man of his beauty sleep,"

"Uh-huh," Technoblade said as he settled at the desk, Tommy in his chair on the other side of it. They'd moved it from behind after Tommy kept throwing paper wads at the back of Technoblade's head. "You can take that up with Phil,"

"Ohilza would take my side," Tommy proclaimed "Big believer in sleep, that man is,"

Technoblade snorted. "Yeah, that's what he says, but when was the last time you saw the man sleep?"

Tommy paused, then slouched. "Fuck. The man is a damn hypocrite,"

"About sleep?" Technoblade said "Yeah he sure is. Kinda lame that you just not picked up on that dude,"

"Oh fuck off," Tommy grumbled. "I've been a little preoccupied, Technoblade. Sorry I didn't manage to keep up with everyone's fucking sleep schedules,"

Technoblade just shook his head. Tommy was acting himself at least. Well, mostly. Head yet to actually meet Technoblade's eyes and was tugging gently at the ends of his hair. It was a gesture that suddenly and distinctly reminded Technoblade of Wilbur.

Technoblade shoved that particular thought away. Thinking about or, er, forbidding, talking about Wilbur would lead to nothing being done.

Technoblade opened his mouth, ready to bring it up with Tommy but- Tommy looked stressed. Technoblade did think Tommy ended it right that second. They'd talk about it later, but maybe, if they worked a little while, he'd make it better. Be more comfortable. Yeah. That made sense.

It was still slow work, and it looked like the format had changed. He'd definitely translated a date that was in the future (which, he intellectually knew that Tommy had lived years Technoblade himself had, but it was still bizarre, to see the dates on the paper as they'd already happened) and it looked like... it looked like pages had been copied from a diary, even though Technoblade wasn't sure what they said yet.

Tommy wasn't being very productive. His was still absently tugging on his hair- tugging on the braid Technoblade had put there,

Technoblade squared his shoulders. He'd faced armies and come out on the other side the only survivor. He'd fought more people than he could begin to count, both to the death and just for fun. He could have this conversation.

"Tommy, I think we need to ta-"

"What's this say?" Tommy said loudly and abruptly, cutting Technoblade off, grabbing a random sheet of paper that Technoblade had already written on. It was one of the failed attempts at translation, coming out to something incomprehensible.

"Nothing," Technoblade said "That's scrap paper,"

Tommy's shoulder slumped "Oh. That's stupid,"

"Bruh," Technoblade said "You aren't- okay. Whatever. That's not what I'm trying to talk to you about. What I was trying to say, Tommy, was that-"

Technoblade was interrupted again by a knock on the door. Tommy practically jumped out of his seat to open the door. "Ranboo!" Tommy boomed as he threw the door open, and Ranboo flinched a little, despite being a few inches taller than Tommy. "Big man! What's up?"

"I-uh- sorry for interrupting," Ranboo started

"You didn't interrupt anything," Tommy insisted, grabbing Ranboo's wrist tightly, pulling him into the room. That was a surprise to Technoblade. Tommy had been hesitant to let any of them in. Phil had finally been able to come in a week or so ago, but here Tommy was, inviting Ranboo in.

“Okay,” Ranboo said slowly, glancing between them, obviously not fooled by Tommy’s very loud proclamations. REgardless he shuffled into the room, awkwardly standing beside the desk, and seemed very interested in a spot on the wall above Technoblade’s head. Fair enough.

“Phil, uh, wanted to know if you guys were coming down for dinner?” Ranboo continued “Said he’d bring food up if you weren’t,”

“Technoblade and I were just about to come down!” Tommy proclaimed.

“No, we weren’t,” Technoblade said, getting to his feet. “Tommy,”

“Bitch,” Tommy spat back immediately, and without thinking. “You’re a bitch,”

“Bruh, I’m not the one who’s lyin’ to Ranboo right now,” Technoblade said, “And you can’t avoid me forever,”

“I-” Ranboo started, but Tommy cut him off.

“Don’t speak for Ranboo! And I wasn’t avoiding you dickhead, you were avoiding me!” Tommy shouted. Ranboo flinched out of the corner of his eye.

“You’re the one who won’t let Ranboo talk for himself- you’ve been talking over him sine he got here!” Technoblade pointed out “You don’t seem to care much about what he says- you probably only dragged him here as a distraction,”

“That’s not fucking true! Ranboo is-” Tommy seemed to catch himself and Technoblade figured it was sorting about the future “Just because you don’t have any fucking friends means that I can’t, Technoblade,”

“Now that was uncalled for-”

“So was telling me I’m only using Ranboo!” Tommy shouted back. His eyes were flashing dangerously and for a moment, it sounded like Wilbur was yelling at him, not Tommy. Technoblade swallowed down the sudden rush of something that he felt. “I get that you’re pissed at me, but fuck off,”

“I wasn’t upset until you started yelling for no reason!” Technoblade exclaimed, resisting the urge to slam his hand on the table.

Tommy scoffed “Yeah right, I’m not fucking stupid Technoblade! I saw your face the other day when I-”

Tommy cut himself off, and Technoblade couldn’t begin to decipher the emotions on his face. Technoblade wasn’t hurt, despite whatever Chat was rambling about. “Listen, I get it, I know you didn’t mean it and- and that’s fine! Tommy Wilbur is your brother, I get it-”

“What the fuck,” Tommy barked out, confused and somehow still angry “No, Techno. That’s- you’re the one who was pissed about me calling you my brother! I fucking-I fucking saw your face! I know you don’t want me to see you like, fucking, that, and-”

“I think I should go-” Ranboo started, interrupting the argument.

“No!” Tommy and Technoblade both snapped at the same time. Ranboo leaving might be better since it was a private conversation, but if he left Tommy was likely to follow and Technoblade wanted this conversation over with because now he was confused. Tommy thought he was-

But, the shout apparently startled Ranboo who was mid-step and he stumbled, slamming into the desk, sending everything on it flying to the floor.

“Sorry!” He exclaimed as Tommy let out a string of curses and Technoblade made an aborted move to catch the papers, freezing halfway as Ranboo tried to scramble onto his knees. Great, that was *just* what they needed!

“I’m sorry,” Ranboo repeated again, already on his knees gathering paper. “Really, I didn’t mean to knock it off,”

“It’s fine,” Technoblade managed to get out and was relatively successful in not sounding terribly angry, at least to his own ears. “Here, I’ll get it, the books are a little delicate and-”

It was too late to Stop Ranboo from picking up Karl’s diary. Ranboo’s face clouded with confusion, which was fair considering it was written in a language that had died a long long time ago. He’d have preferred Ranboo not see it, but, at least he couldn’t read it or anything-

“Hey guys, uh why is my name in this book?”

Chapter End Notes

too tired for notes tonight.

enjoy.

love you guys and get some rest drink water <3

you'll never be what is in your heart

Chapter Summary

bedrock bros finally have a conversation, real not clickbait.

Chapter Notes

TW: vague mention of... not suicide exactly, but kinda. Typical warnings from tags.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

For a moment, there was stunned silence after Ranboo's question. Tommy already half-way regretted the things he said to Technoblade, even though he wasn't sorry or anything. That'd be bullshit. But, Ranboo, who had very explicitly said that he couldn't read Enchanting table, could read it.

And apparently, his name was mentioned in the book.

Wasn't that just Tommy's fucking luck?

"Guys?" Ranboo said hesitantly, glancing between them nervously "Hey, what's-"

"You can read that book?" Technoblade asked in disbelief, looking between Ranboo and Tommy. "Did you know about this?" He demanded, not even giving Ranboo a chance to answer. Tommy scowled at him.

"Of course not!" Tommy exclaimed "I even fucking asked him if he could and he said no! I didn't know he was lying to me!"

"Hey! I wasn't lying! I don't... this isn't enchanting table, is it?" Ranboo asked, glancing between them. Fucking bastard was being genuine and Tommy knew it. It'd be easier if Ranboo was a lying bastard. "Right?"

"No, it's not enchantin' table," Technoblade said flatly "That's why we asked,"

Ranboo grimaced "Okay, good point, but, uh, I just assumed it was Enderain. It reads... pretty similar. I can definitely pick my name clearly out. Which, weird, by the way. Why do you guys have a book with my name in it considering I just met you?"

Tommy glanced at Technoblade, who, unfortunately, was relatively stone-faced. Fuck. Didn't seem like he was getting any help there.

"Well, we didn't know it had your name in it, dumbass," Tommy snapped, because that was true "It's in enchanting table, which, again, you said you couldn't read,"

"That sounds very convenient," Ranboo said "And more than a little weird. I'm sorry but that's just concerning. Were you guys like, stalking me?"

"Absolutely not!" Tommy exclaimed, "That'd be fucking weird.No, I.... uh..."

He looked at Technoblade for help, trying not to let the panic show on his face in his silent plea for help. Technoblade was still stone-faced.

"I'm from the future," Tommy blurted, because really, what else was he supposed to say? Fuck Ranboo would think he was crazy. "I got sent back in time by the universe or some shit after dying three times. That book was given to me by a man named Karl Jacobs who is a fucking bitch, by the way. And despite being a big man, normal people can't read Enchanting table/"

"Do you understand that you sound absolutely insane right now?" Ranboo asked, glazing between them "Like, I'm sorry but you sound nuts,"

"He's not lyin'" Technoblade added "Karl Jacobs showed up on our doorstep, gave us this book, then vanished. Like, literally disintegrated. It was a little horrifyin'"

Tommy was glad Technoblade was at least backing him, now. "I know how it sounds, but I'm not crazy,"

"I..." Ranboo wasn't convinced. Of course, he wasn't convinced. That made sense. What normal person would be convinced by that? "I mean, I guess it makes sense,"

Tommy's next argument, which was basically just going to be bullying Ranboo into agreeing. The fucker was pretty easy to convince of things, honestly, and gaped.

"I mean, the nightmares? The fact that I'm pretty sure you just. Knew my name before I told you. Also, you just acted very friendly to me and honestly most people don't, so I guess either you stalked me or actually are from the future,"

He glanced over at Tommy "And no offense man, but, uh, you're a shitty liar,"

"Fuck you too," Tommy snapped "I'm not a shitty liar- I'm a brilliant liar. The poggest liar. I'm offended you insulted me in my own home-"

"But glad that you believe him "Technoblade cut in. "He sounds crazy, but he's serious. We've spent the last several months tryin' to get the book translated with no luck,"

Tommy didn't exactly want to force Ranboo to help him- if Ranboo's name was in the book, Ender only knew what other shit was in there, and honestly, it would be fucking embarrassing for everyone to know. But, if Ranboo did it, that meant Technoblade wouldn't have to help and Tommy could probably convince Ranboo to keep quiet, Just in case there happened to be a nice detailed history of how Tommy betrayed Technoblade.

"So... I'm guessing you want me to translate it for you," RAnboo asked, lifting the book up.

"I mean, you don't have to," Tommy said, "But, it'd be much appreciated. I'd even stop calling you boob-boy,"

"Forever?" Ranboo said skeptically. Tommy scoffed. As if.

"Nah, for like a week, max, pussy," Tommy corrected.

"You know what, I'll take it," Ranboo sighed. "Do you want me to start now, or...?"

"Nah," Technoblade cut in "Go-go eat dinner or something. We'll start tomorrow,"

"Cool," Ranboo said, awkwardly getting back to his feet. He hesitated, still holding the book "I'll just, uh, yeah. I'll just set it down here and leave now. Yeah, I'll just uh. Yeah, I'm going,"

He set the book down and practically sprinted out of the room. Tommy couldn't blame him. He'd much rather leave than face whatever conversation he and Technoblade had been having. Or argument. Whatever. Not his fucking problem Technoblade had wanted to bring up the one thing Tommy had been desperately avoiding. "Well, I'll be heading out now-"

"Sit down, Tommy," Technoblade said, "You're not walkin' out just yet,"

"But I should go console Ranboo. I think we traumatized him, you know. I'd be a shit friend if I just let him be all distraught and mopey," Tommy argued, edging toward the door.

"Sit. *Down* ." Technoblade snapped.

Tommy flinched at his tone- unprepared for it, and slinked back to his seat, sliding down against the wood back. Technoblade had taken a seat again and Tommy couldn't read his face. He hated it when he couldn't read Technoblade's face.

"Fine, I'm sitting, bitch," Tommy grumbled. Now, here it would come, Technoblade would get all awkward and firmly remind him that Tommy wasn't his brother- could never be his brother- and that he better remember that- that he better not slip up again.

"Why do you think I'm mad at you?" Technoblade asked instead.

Immediately Tommy was on alert. Dream had asked him things like that before, in exile. Trick questions. Technoblade hadn't done that before, but it could start now. He always knew there was a line and Tommy had waltzed right over it now.

He'd answer wrong- probably because there wasn't a fucking right answer or Tommy just wasn't smart enough or good enough to figure it out. He'd answer wrong and Technoblade would have a reason to kick him out. If he wasn't careful he might get Tubbo kicked out too. Maybe RAnboo, even though Technoblade had always had a soft spot for the enderman hybrid that he didn't seem to have for his own brother.

Ex-brother.

Whatever.

"I assume it's because I fucked up," Tommy spat sullenly "Or because I was annoying. That's usually why people get pissed at me,"

"I'm not mad," Technoblade said.

"Bullshit," Tommy snapped "You're fucking yelling and shit. And you look pissed. Just-Just get it over with man. Stop fucking drawing it out. You're mad because I crossed a line. Because I called you my brother and you-you barely tolerate me. I've pushed boundaries and been nothing but shit and-"

Tommy let out a shuddering breath. Fuck. He just needed to shut up. He just needed to-

"Tommy," Technoblade was there, hovering just outside of arm's reach now, crouched on the floor "Tommy, I'm not mad at you. I was just frustrated when you started yellin' at me,"

"But- but I saw your face," Tommy protested "It was all- Techno I've seen you pissed off before and that was- I know that's what it was,"

"Tommy, I'm not mad that you called me your brother," Technoblade said, saying what Tommy had been shying away from. "You don't- you don't have to feel bad about it. I... I understand that you probably didn't mean it, and you won't hurt my feelings if you take it back,"

The problem was Tommy *meant* it.

He could get out of it. He could- he could play along, but Tommy was tired. He was always keeping secrets and playing Jenga with the tower of fucking half-truths and buried emotions and he could feel it tumbling down around him.

"That's the problem, Technoblade," Tommy snapped. "I did mean, it asshole. It wasn't-It wasn't a joke,"

"Oh," Technoblade said quietly "Tommy I-uh, hold on. I gotta, like, recalibrate my thinkin' because that's not what I was expectin' you to say,"

Tommy, for once, was quiet, hands clenched and trembling.

"I assumed it was a joke," Technoblade admitted, rubbing the back of his neck. "I figured- I didn't figure you would want me to be your brother. I'm not exactly the best at emotions and people and well-"

"You were mad because you thought I was joking?" Tommy asked, "What the fuck?"

"I wasn't mad Tommy!" Technoblade exclaimed "Kid, c'mon I've been sayin' that. I just was tryin' to tell you that it was okay if you were jokin' and it wasn't gonna make me upset or hurt my feeling, or-"

"But it did hurt your feelings," Tommy interrupted. He'd seen Technoblade's face and head though Techno was angry.

Technoblade was hurt. He thought he was angry, but he *wasn't*. "Don't lie to me, Techno, I'm not stupid, I saw your expression I just thought- I thought you were mad. I thought you were about to fucking, kick me out or something,"

"I already told you I wasn't goin' to kick you out Tommy," Technoblade said "I'm a man of my word. I'm not going back on it,"

That was... to be fair, Technoblade had kept his word. So far, every promise he'd made to Tommy, he'd kept, even if it involved lying directly to Phil. Technoblade had braided his hair. He'd protected him, and even despite his grumbling he'd let Ranboo stay without any real protest.

Technoblade suddenly looked tired "Tommy, I don't... I'm not good at emotions. This isn't easy for me. I've not... I've not been someone's brother in a long time and I never was very good at it before that. "

Tommy frowned. He knew something happened between Wilbur and Technoblade when Technoblade left. He wasn't sure what, besides a fight, but it was about then that Technoblade had practically vanished and stopped giving any of them but Phil the time of day.

He'd always figured that Technoblade wanted it. Maybe not.

"I figured you just wanted the Blade," Technoblade finally settled on. His voice was a touch bitter "It's all most people want from me,"

And fuck, didn't it always come down to this. The last time Technoblade had told him that, he'd screamed it in his face. Tommy swallowed past the lump in his throat. His hands trembled as he pressed them into the desk, trying to press himself into reality, not- Tommy swallowed.

"I actually hate the fucking Blade," Tommy spat "I'd much rather have a- a brother. I just assumed you wouldn't fucking want me. All my bullshit and secrets and- and I've done bad things Technoblade,"

Tommy was a murderer, a betrayer. He was selfish and-

"You're an idiot Tommy," Technoblade said instead, "You think I care about doin' bad stuff? You think Phil cares? I've done worse things than you can dream of doin'. And whatever you did in that future doesn't matter. I care about you"

It seemed like Technoblade was almost as shocked by that admission as Tommy was, surprise on his face like he hadn't meant to admit it.

"You don't," Tommy said, shaking his head "You don't you're just- you're just guilty. You just think you're doing Phil a favor, or aren't going back on your word or-"

“You calling me a liar?” Technoblade interrupted ““m Tommy, I’m not exactly good at admitting emotions. But, C’mon. I finally make myself do it and you call me a liar. Is that what you think of me?”

Fuck. Of all the things that Tommy had ever thought about Technoblade, liar was never really one of them. Maybe Tommy had been misled, and willfully blind, but really, Teechnoblade had never really lied about what he was doing. Technoblade didn’t care for lying- he either told the truth and used brute fucking force if it didn’t go his way,

But that meant he was telling the truth and Tommy... could he accept that? He shouldn’t. He shouldn’t. He’d thought that before and it had burned him but...

Tommy was fucking exhausted. So maybe it was fucking stupid. Maybe it was his most pog move, or his best moment, but... Tommy was tired.

And Technoblade seemed earnest, earnest as he could get, shuffling his feet just a little awkwardly and looking more like the brother Tommy remembered from his early childhood than he had in a very long time.

He didn’t want to cry- wasn’t sure he could still cry these days since that’s all he did anymore. And it was pussy shit. So instead, he just came around the desk and gave Technoblade a hug.

Technoblade stiffened for a moment, like he hadn’t been prepared for it, or had been expecting a hit or something then slowly wrapped his arms around Tommy in return.

“You’re a fucking idiot,” Tommy muttered. “And a pussy. And a clingy fuck,”

“You’re the one who hugged me,” Technoblade complained, but didn’t let go. His voice was oddly thick.

Tommy did let go after just a minute, because it was a little awkward and he was tired and hungry.

“You can’t take it back now,” Tommy joked as he headed toward the door. It was.. Mostly a joke anyway. Fuck off, he wasn’t *insecure* . “We’re brothers, Technoblade. You’re stuck with me and can’t fucking get rid of me now,”

“Oh no,” Technoblade said flatly, as he followed behind “Tommy, you’re stuck with *me* ,”

Something eased in Tommy’s chest at Technoblade’s dry assurance. Sure, he would still have to do clean up with Ranboo, and sure, maybe he had a lot of shit coming, and a lot of problems. But Tommy was tired. And for now, if he could just believe that Technoblade really had his back... he’d take it.

Having Ranboo around made the translating go much, much faster. Phil of course had already liked the kid- he fit right in with everyone else, but he wouldn’t pretend that it wasn’t a relief that the translation was going faster.

Tommy had finally caved- offering to let Phil read it since “Everyone else is fucking in my business, I don’t care,”

Phil counted it as a win.

He tried not to hover, though, to be fair, based on the looks that Techno was giving him, he wasn't exactly doing a good job. Oh well. He couldn't help it. That's why he was perched on the windowsill while Tommy and Ranboo sat on one side of the desk, while Technoblade sat on the other. He'd dropped off a snack and decided that he was going to sit in the window for fun. It was the best wing sunning spot in the house.

Yep. That was it. Even though the sun had set hours ago and it was dark. He just didn't want to move.

“We finished the pages,” Ranboo said, suddenly. Phil didn't quite jump but his wings, which had been relaxed against the window, flared in his surprise.

Tommy snatched the paper out of Ranboo's hand, who protested, but didn't make a move to snatch it back. “Let me read it, boob boy,”

“I should've made you promise to quit that longer,” Ranboo said dejectedly.

Tommy ignored him, clearing his throat loudly. He paused though, something flickering across his face that made Phil uneasy before he shoved it back at Ranboo. “Never mind, that's too much. You read it bitch,”

“1/26/XXXX

TommyInnit died yesterday. I don't think that happened before- or maybe it did? I don't know. It was an accident, according to Niki and Jack. He wandered onto the nuclear test site, just as Tubbo detonated the bombs and well....There was still a body to bury, but not enough to save. They found Tubbo with him, sobbing.

Speaking of Tubbo, he isn't doing well at all. Can't blame him though. He's only seventeen and his best friend just died by his own hand-even if it was an accident.

I can't believe Tommy died like that, so suddenly, after everything that happened. We were all half-way convinced he was immortal or something, because anyone else would've long been dead.

I heard that Bad and Ant threw a party though, when they got the news, inside Tommy's house and everything. I knew the Egg changed them, but I hadn't realized how honking bad it was. Quackity is pretty upset- I didn't realize they were so close... I feel bad. Tommy messed up a bunch and we weren't exactly close, but he wasn't a bad guy, you know? Wish I'd known him better.

Anyway, the bloodvines grew today. In fact, they grew overnight. It's concerning how fast they're starting to move. I went out and broke a few this morning, but it didn't exactly feel

right, after what happened yesterday. Hopefully, the growth will slow down so we can try and remove it.

1/29/XXXX

I wrote three days ago, but things have gotten far worse than I expected, far more quickly. The Egg has taken Tubbo, Hannah, and Punz.

Tubbo went of his own volition, according to what Ranboo said, or at least what I could make out between his tears. Ranboo said he was eaten up by guilt and the egg was promising him things- peace, safety, I don't know... I wish someone could've stopped him. I hope Ranboo doesn't follow him- none of them deserve this. I told him to go back to... wherever his home is. He doesn't live close anymore.

Hannah and Punz were forced by the others or just liked the egg. I'm not sure, but I saw them this morning, and their eyes were both red. I didn't even realize they were gunning for Hannah. The bloodvines have expanded again, and are getting close to Q's stuff. After Tommy's death, the Egg seemed to get more powerful- I knew that Bad and Ant were out for Tommy because of the egg, but I hadn't realized there could be more of a connection. I still don't know if it's a coincidence or not. I haven't traveled in a while- hopefully, I can go soon, and maybe I can fix this"

There was stunned silence for a moment before Tommy snorted "Wow. Karl was a dramatic bitch,"

Phil couldn't quite form words. Even though the temperature of the room was the same, he suddenly felt terribly cold. Ranboo had read it evenly, despite the contents, only stumbling over his own name.

Tommy seemed alright, but Phil had gotten better at reading him (~~he should have already known, why hadn't he always known?~~) and he really wasn't. Though, to be fair, he wasn't sure Tommy had been alright in a very long time.

"So, the Egg is what Karl was worried about," Phil found himself asking. His voice was distant in his own ears, even as he forced himself to think logically. Tommy didn't need Phil to get emotional over things that hadn't happened- wouldn't happen- no matter how Phil felt about it.

"Yeah," Tommy said, "I didn't... I knew it wasn't great, but fuck I didn't realize it was taking people and possessing them. That's fucked up. Guess my immunity to that bitch really is odd, huh?"

It was very fucked up. So was the fact that Tubbo had just. Walked into it. That no one had stopped him. And that apparently people were just being taken left and right. Phil didn't know the other people, but it didn't bode well for what was happening. And the diary still had many pages. Phil... wasn't sure he wanted to know what was in the rest of the book.

“You got blown up?” Ranboo asked quietly, sounding horrified “You-you died?”

Fuck, Ranboo didn’t know. They’d told him that Tommy was from a fucked up future, that it was bad and that he’d somehow ended up back here, but apparently, Tommy hadn’t told him that.

Tommy flinched, swallowing hard. “I’ve died three times bitch. I’m like a fucking cat. I just came back,” He gave a grin that was convincing to absolutely no one

“That’s-”

“Fuck off Ranboo, I don’t need any pity,” Tommy snapped, crossing his arms. “Just- “

Tommy paused, turning toward the door. “Fuck, Tubbo- I gotta go,”

Tommy was out of the room in a flash leaving the other three of them there awkwardly. “I’ll, uh, leave these here. Go see what’s up with them,” Ranboo said, leaving his papers at the table before turning tail and running.

Phil couldn’t blame him. His wings ached to take to the skies, to go up above everything and think. But he couldn’t on Hypixel. And he couldn’t leave, not as much as he wasn’t to take his space the boys needed him. They needed him here and Phil had failed at that before. He wouldn’t fail at it now.

“Fucking hell, Techno,” Phil said finally “That was... fuck,”

“That’s certainly one way to put it,” Technoblade said dryly, but the humor wasn’t really there. “I knew he got blown up- Tommy had already told me that much. He had- he had a couple of flashbacks early on. I don’t know if it was an accident or not, but he wouldn’t say,”

Phil let out a long breath. “You don’t think Tubbo-”

“Not Tubbo,” Technoblade cut him off instantly “I don’t think Tommy would ever even consider it, but you read what this Karl guy wrote. I don’t think Tubbo, in any timeline, could ever do something like that to Tommy on purpose,”

“I didn’t think there was a timeline where I could hurt my own sons so badly,” Phil countered, though he was certain that Technoblade was probably right. Tubbo, as pragmatic and competitive as he could be, would never hurt Tommy. Not like that. “It’s hard to imagine us making Tommy so scared of us,”

Technoblade stayed silent, his gaze drifting away from Phil. Something cold curled in Phil’s gut at the look on Technoblade’s face.

“Techno you aren’t-”

“We’re ruthless men, Philza,” Technoblade said, cutting him off. His voice was quiet and serious. “I’d trust you to always have my back. I don’t know if we’d have helped Tommy’s before all this happened. I probably wouldn’t have, if it wasn’t beneficial for me,”

Phil was stunned at Technoblade's admission. Maybe he shouldn't have been. Before Phil could respond, Techno spoke again. "I care about Tommy now, Phil. He's a good kid. Before ethos though? I might've cared about him, but I don't know Phil,"

And then Technoblade was gone too, leaving Phil alone with a sinking feeling in his gut.

It was disorienting, that Technoblade would ever admit that- even if it were perhaps true. (Technoblade had always been better at being pragmatic than Phil). But something had definitely shifted between Tommy and Technoblade. Technoblade, for one, had admitted that he cared about Tommy. If Phil hadn't already been reeling from... literally everything else, the fact that Technoblade admitted it was enough to set him off-kilter. He knew that Technoblade cared- the braid behind Tommy's ear had proved that much, but Phil hadn't expected Technoblade to admit it...ever.

It was honestly a big step for him.

He'd pulled away from their family hard, around the time he turned sixteen and Phil wasn't sure why, though he suspected it was a combination of the voices and what Technoblade was drawn to do because of it. They'd never quite figured out why Technoblade had received the voices, but it was likely something to do with his half-human, half Piglin heritage and Technoblade had long given up on answers so Phil had let it rest.

If Technoblade was happy, then he was happy. And if that meant Technoblade wanted to pull back from them, Phil couldn't blame him. He and his brothers didn't have much in common at that point

Though that might have been Phil's own fault, he supposed. He hadn't given them many chances.

Maybe he could make up for it now. Phil hoped he was making up for it.

He pulled out his communicator. There were a few messages from random folk, he didn't care much about but scrolled for Wilbur's name. He typed up another message- it had been a few weeks since he'd sent one, hadn't it?

He swallowed down the guilt and sent a simple message. It wasn't new, and he doubted Wilbur was even reading them, but-

But at least it was something. Phil tucked his comm away. He still felt a little ill and hadn't even fully considered the consequences of what they'd found so far, but Tommy and Tubbo needed him.

He hadn't been there before, but he would be now, so help him, ender.

Chat was driving him up the wall.

"Would you all please shut up?" He snapped, rubbing his temple. They'd been nearly unbearable since Tommy and brought Ranboo home anyway, then with the

development of Tommy calling him his brother (and apparently meaning it), and whatever the hell kind of mess Karl Jacobs had dragged ~~his brother~~ Tommy into.

Chat wasn't exactly a fan of Karl at the moment.

Technoblade shared similar opinions.

Yeah, great, good job, Put all this on Tommy, who was fucking traumatized from a future where apparently Technoblade and Phil were such assholes that Tommy still didn't trust them after months.

Technoblade could understand how he got there, maybe. He wasn't exactly the best at being family. he got it. It was still Wilbur's fault, their fight, but Technoblade wasn't cut out to be part of a family. That was okay.

Except-

"Shut up," Technoblade snarled, as Chat crescendoed louder "I can't hear myself think,"

Technobro

e

e

e

Technoprotect

Technobro

Blood

Philza

I'm bored

Emotions are boring.

Kill Karl!

Destroy the egg

E

Tubbo killed Tommy pog

Tommy dead pog

You were mean to Phil :(

e

I'm bored.

Blood

Philza sad?

Blood

Technobro.

e

e

So helpful. Thanks, Chat.

He'd snapped at Phil- something that he very rarely did, and already he felt bad about it. Phil didn't deserve that- not when it was Technoblade's own, *unfortunate*, emotions that were running high.

"I'll apologize to Phil, Chat," he muttered, and that didn't do much to settle them, but he would. Phil deserved an apology, and probably an explanation.

He was hesitant to admit what he and Tommy had... come to terms with to Phil. He'd be terribly overbearing about it and would read too much into it. Technoblade wasn't really sure he'd bothered to think about the implications. It had only been three days and he had very purposefully not considered it.

He had other things to do, like a couple of fights, and helping Ranboo acclimate to the fact that Tommy was from the future, and helping work on the new pages of translation.

Well, he wasn't even sure he was needed, but if he wasn't there it was highly likely that everyone would get off track.

And with chat being so irritated, he'd thrown himself into training. It wouldn't sustain forever, but... for now, it was good enough. Chat loved his emotional turmoil almost as much as blood. Well. Not really, but they did enjoy it, and he was fighting enough that they weren't too upset he wasn't spilling actual blood. It would be fine. He wasn't some kid with no self-control. He and Chat usually got along.

Even when they were annoying.

"You guys aren't helpin' me out here," he grumbled, as he change out of his more casual clothes into his training outfit. He was going to go process information as he normally did- by either beating the crap out of a training dummy.

Tubbo had apparently overheard what had been said- it wasn't exactly a secret, but Technoblade couldn't imagine that he'd taken it well. Technoblade hadn't taken it well, and

he hadn't just found out that he was the one that had killed his own best friend in the future-accident or not.

Kid was already fucked up enough as it was, with the whole death thing that Phil still didn't know about. Tommy and Ranboo would be busy with that for a while, and Phil would probably hover over all of them for the rest of the night. He'd certainly been rattled, from the way his wings had puffed up.

Technoblade wasn't exactly taking it well himself, but he was a little more prepared than Phil was. Phil still... Technoblade didn't know what was quite going on in Phil's head but Phil was still struggling to come to terms with Tommy being in danger. Maybe it was because Phil had been a little overprotective, and if he wasn't, Wilbur certainly was.

Tommy was almost the age to explore though, and Technoblade wasn't quite sure that Phil had realized Tommy was growing up until he'd become a different person overnight. Literally.

Techno, for all that he hadn't been around, at least didn't really... he didn't really know Tommy. Sure, he remembered the kid Tommy was when he left, but that kid wasn't who Technoblade anticipated, so maybe it was easier to accept it.

Well. Not accept it. Technoblade would kill anyone that got in his way if it prevented Tommy from having to relieve that future.

Aww, Technosoft.

Technobro

Blood?

Blood for the BLOOD god!

Kill!

Technoprotect!

Chat was supportive of that, at least.

But, there were no enemies to kill, and Tommy wasn't on the server (he still hadn't said whose server. He'd basically ignored Ranboo when he asked, a couple of days ago. It was only a matter of time until they found out, so he didn't know why Tommy wasn't answering the question already but-) so he could train.

He would deal with the anger, and the fear, and the frustration that he felt tonight and try to talk to Tommy tomorrow when he was ready. Tubbo too. Phil would hover tonight, keep them all safe. Technoblade needed this. He wasn't sure that he wanted to be around them until he blew off a little steam anyway.

Thank Ender that the training arenas were open all hours. Of course, the more elite ones had hours- but the public ones were open, and tended to be dead enough after dark that no one

bothered him.

No one bothered him, and if they did, it only took a dark look for them to back off. Hey, there was something to be said for his reputation keeping social interactions to a bare minimum.

He didn't bother to head to the other house, just left Phil a note on the kitchen table, and headed out, pulling his cloak around him. He was wearing his skull mask, since he did try to keep his face somewhat less recognizable.

His reputation, however, also meant he had a lot of enemies.

You win some, you lose some.

"Stop spamming 'L', Chat," he grumbled under his breath. The person on the other side of the street cast him an odd look but scurried on when they saw his face. Ha. Take that social interaction.

It took him a few minutes to reach a training arena. There were closer ones, but on the off chance that someone, fan or foe, decided to follow him, he preferred not to broadcast the location of his home, where his family friends, the others, slept.

He didn't even have to swipe to get in, since it was public, and made a beeline straight for the area that was dedicated to PVP. Only a handful of people were out since it was late, and only the desperate, people with day jobs, and people who were insane came so late.

The PVP section was especially empty. There was the section for dummy practice, of course, but the longer Technoblade thought about Tommy, and the future, and how blaise his death as treated-

He broke that chain of thought. He needed a living breathing opponent. Preferably one that wasn't the kid who could barely hold a sword.

Behind you!

Incoming!

People!

Fighter?

Dangerous.

Oh fuck

E

Blood

Blood

Behind you?

“You looking for a fight?”

Thanks to Chat’s warning, Technoblade didn’t jump, though he was immediately wary. Chat was sending a variety of signals about the man leaned casually up against the barrier beside Techno.

Technoblade studied him from the corner of his eye. “First of all, that’s the most aggressive way to ask someone to spar, ever. ” Technoblade said dryly, “But I was hopin’ to, but the poor kid’s the only one out there, and honestly, I don’t think it’d be right to fight him. He can’t even hold the sword right. It’d be like kickin’ an orphan or something. Not that I haven’t done that,”

The other man laughed, probably a little too loudly and a little too long- his joke wasn’t that funny, even Chat didn’t think so- before catching his breath enough to speak. “Yeah, I thought so too. It’s why I’ve been practicing parkour instead,”

Technoblade nodded. “Well,” he said slowly “I assume you didn’t come over here to make small talk. Cause if you did, I’m gonna have to ask you to leave, cause I’m not exactly in the mood. But, if you’re wantin’ to spar, we can give it a go. As long as you don’t mind losing.’ He wasn’t sure if the guy knew who he was or not- it was hard to tell since he had a face covering on. It was kinda weird, but hey, Technoblade didn’t have much room to talk in that regard.

The man laughed again, though a little more appropriately. Even if his laugh was a little odd-like some sort of wheeze. Were his lungs ok?

“No, no small talk. I’ve heard the famous Technoblade isn’t known for that. And you never know- I might win,”

Technoblade did laugh then, even if it was short. The guy had guts, that was for sure. “Alright, you’ve challenged me. Gotta defend my honor now, can’t believe some rando is challengin’ me to a PVP duel, thinkin’ they’ll win,”

“Let’s see how it goes,” The man challenged, though he didn’t seem arrogant, just confident, and a little excited, based on the way he bounced on the balls of his feet. “Let’s spar it out, Blade,”

“Lead the way,”

Technoblade shed his cloak but kept the mask. His opponent did the same. Huh. Technoblade should probably ask for his name, but since they were literally about to fight that’d probably be awkward right?

Like, he should’ve asked earlier, but he was distracted, and Chat had been loud, and he just wanted to fight someone who looked halfway competent so Phil wouldn’t tease him about

havin' to beat up kids, so he hadn't thought of it.

Now it was awkward.

Yikes.

Whatever, Technoblade could probably just pummel him, then make fun of him a little, and leave. That would work, right?

Like it wouldn't matter?

He hoped not, because that was the plan. He grabbed one of the training swords and a training ax, since they weren't really supposed to use real weapons in the training arena. It was lame, in his opinion, and who was gonna stop him? The guy sleeping behind the desk by the entrance? No.

But, the other guy had gone for training weapons, so eh, whatever.

Technoblade could still make him respawn with wood.

"Ready?" Technoblade asked as he squared up, easily sinking into his fighting stance, loose but aware.

The other man gave the distinct impression of grinning, even though Technoblade couldn't see his face, then lunged.

It was a kinda dirty move, but Technoblade had used it himself, on a few occasions.

Besides, Chat was already in an uproar, mostly screaming for blood, which wasn't helpful, but his most loyal voices, they at least gave him calls and had seen his opponents move before Techno did, so he easily dodged. That was an easy move. He'd heaped, that based on the shape the guy was in, there would at least be some fight. Maybe not.

"Gotta try harder than that," Technoblade goaded as he sidestepped the lunge. He brought his own sword down hard but found that his opponent managed to block it.

That was at least mildly impressive. Maybe this fight would be interesting after all.

Technoblade lost himself in the rhythm of the fight. He landed several good hits, but he received a few in return, even with Chat's direction.

His opponent was very light on his feet. It reminded him a little of Tommy, who just didn't have the sheer bulk that Techno, or even Phil with his wings, had to contend with. He almost bounced from side to side, ducking and darting, trying to get around, or behind, or above in order to get hits in.

Technoblade still managed to block him- he was good, but he was obviously mostly trained in arenas. Illegal fighting arenas, probably, but arenas nonetheless. He left his side open too much, as well as his back. It was one on one, but he was definitely a little too open.

That's the weakness that Tecnobalde could exploit. Technoblade would take a few hits-and did- in order to be in a position to block the next, more fatal, blow. That was the key difference. The guy was too wrapped up in getting hits in, and in blocking every blow simultaneously. He was wicked with an ax, but still had a ways to go.

It wasn't easy though, and the guy was honestly putting up a far better fight than Technoblade anticipated, but after about five minutes, he saw his opening. A slightly sloppy swing, with a little too much power behind it, let Technoblade easily disarm him, using the trick that he and Tommy had developed. Oh, the sweet taste of future knowledge.

The ax clattered to the side, and before the man could pull out his sword, Technoblade hit him twice in the head, hard enough that the man dissolved into sparkles, then popped back into existence a few feet away at the designated PVP respawn area. His mask was intact, and he looked no worse for the wear.

Technoblade was glad- he hadn't exactly meant to pummel the man to death, but hey, sometimes the blood lust wants what it wants.

"Okay, okay," the man said, once he was back in earshot, rubbing the back of his neck "You got me this time- how the hell did you get me so fast? My friends usually take forever to beat me in PVP, if they do at all!"

Technoblade snorted "I've not been the reigning PVP champion on Hypixel for over two years for nothin'. I don't hold skill streak record for looks,"

The man winces "Fair enough. Still, I didn't think you,"

He trailed off, letting the sentence hang. Technoblade rolled his eyes.

"You didn't think I'd be that good, did you? Lots of people don't. Don't worry too much about bein' a loser. Most people are when they fight me,"

"That- that sounds so arrogant, but also, I'm not even mad! I just wanna know how you got so good!" The guy asked. He seemed pretty excitable. Not like a kid, but, well, he just wanted to learn.

"Well, see, the thing is, you probably learned in training arenas. Right? Safe from deaths, or at least from people who weren't gonna kill you? Hypixel was my, uh, let's call it my retirement plan. I didn't exactly learn from sage methods. It honestly 0/10, wouldn't recommend to anyone else,"

"That sounds like you're trying to gatekeep your PVP lessons, The guy said, crossing his arms.

Technoblade gaped a minute- was this guy serious. "Bruh, I literally killed a man for the first time when I was 13. I wouldn't really recommend that course of training to anyone,"

The man winced "Sorry, that joke, uh, didn't exactly go over well,"

“Yeah, not quite,” Technoblade agreed with a snort. There was an awkward moment of silence. Shit. Technoblade had made it awkward. Uh, what did he say now? “Wanna fight again?”

“Sure!” The man said. Technoblade got the impression he was smiling again. Maybe it was the creepy white smile mask. “Oh, and by the way, my name is Dream, I forgot to introduce myself earlier,”

Dream? Why did that sound familiar?

Chat spiked, but he ignored them. He knew he’d heard that name... “You’re competing to be in the PVP championship in a couple weeks, right?” Technoblade asked, snapping his fingers “That’s why you seemed familiar. I’ve heard people talking about you.”

“Yeah!” he said excitedly “Maybe we’ll fight in it against each other!”

Dream, according to the rumors, was wiping the floor in the circuits, and had been compared to Techno himself. Seeing how the guy fought, it made sense. He wasn't sure that he'd make it to fighting Technoblade, but just based on reputation and one fight, it would surprise Techno if Dream didn't make the Championship tournament.

“Maybe,” Technoblade said “Let’s see if you’d have a shot at beating me,”

They spared for the next couple of hours. Technoblade won all but three of the matches- twice Chat had distracted him, and once, Dream had managed to pick out a weakness in Technoblade’s left feint that he’d been trying to overcome for years.

The rest of them ranged from close to a couple of times that Techno all but critted Dream out. Dream was a fast learner too, obviously, and had immediately started adapting to Technoblade’s style. He was definitely someone to watch out for, though Technoblade wasn't worried about this tournament. Give him a few more months though, and he’d be a beast.

He was funny too- Technoblade wasn’t a people person, exactly, but Dream had a way of making quips that lead to some fun, but tiring banter. Really, besides Philza or Tommy, he couldn’t have asked for a better sparring partner. And it was nice to spar someone who didn’t have the same style he was used to.

What was the use of training if you didn’t get a challenge?

Eventually though,. Dream’s comm buzzed between rounds and he checked it. “Shit. Hey, I gotta go. It was fun sparring with you, but I think my friend did something stupid, and need to go make sure he doesn’t get arrested for it. Idiot let his temper get the best of him,”

Technoblade grinned wryly, thinking of Tommy. “Dang, you’re on babysitter duty? lame,”

Dream scoffed but didn’t seem offended “Sorry, Technoblade. I forget that you don’t have idiot friends like the rest of us,”

Technoblade just laughed, instead of bringing up Tommy. Again. Enemies. Dream seemed like a nice enough guy, but that didn't mean Technoblade trusted him. "Whatever, you probably just made this guy up so I'd stop beating you up,"

"Oh fuck off," Dream said, then his comm buzzed "Shit, I think he set something on fire-gotta go! I'll see you in that championship!"

Dream sprinted across the gym, hurdling over barriers instead of using the door, like a normal person. Huh.

Technoblade watched him go. Well, as far as social interaction went and sparing, that could have gone far worse. Chat wasn't really any quieter, but he was at least tired enough that he could probably sleep. That sounded nice. A break from chat, and whatever the fuck happened with Tommy.

Technoblade pulled out his own comm as he gathered up his cloak. There was a message from Phil.

P1lzA: We need 2 talk when u get home.

Okay. So, maybe he wouldn't be going straight to sleep.

Chapter End Notes

1) Hey! So! It's been a minute! I really have no excuse, but I really have been working on this chapter since before I published the last one. The muses were just slow. I did have to write a bunch for my creative writing class, so we'll blame those short stories.

2) This was, fun fact, originally over 15,000 words, and still not done so I split it as naturally as I could. Next chapter will probably be around 10k.

3) PLEASE REMEMBER: ever single character is an unreliable narrator! Just because they think something does not always mean it is true. Doesn't mean everything is false, but just remember- unreliable. All of them.

4) Not much else, but take care, drink water, have a good night. Love you guys! <3

you held it like a mirror, showing me the life I chose

Chapter Summary

Wilbur Soot's Adventure in Friendship, Family, and Shenanigans

Chapter Notes

It's wilbur, bitches.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Schlatt was a fucking manic in the mods.

It was *great* .

He was ruthless about “winning” even though he rarely tried to beat the ‘ender dragon’ they had set up. No, his version of winning was being the last one alive. It was a bit brutal, but it was fun. It was like a game, trying to pinpoint the moment that Schlatt went from cooperation to competition and trying not to let Schlatt know he knew. Of course, not all the mods lent themselves to this type of competition. They had to be hardcore mods to make it work. On a couple occasions, when they all worked together, they had actually won.

That was fun.

The others didn’t seem to like the ones like lava rising much- Schlatt had won that one- nor the falling TNT (Wilbur was proud of his win, even if he’d had to sacrifice Niki in that game.) and he could tell they were getting antsy.

“You kicked me out,” Niki said, glaring up at Wilbur. “You betrayed me, Wil, how could you?”

Wilbur was still riding the high of his win in TNT. He had just made it back to the rooms they were rent with a disgruntled Schlatt in tow. He’d found Schlatt getting a drink from someone on the street, which was just generally a bad idea, and it seemed like he’d had plenty to drink already. Schlatt didn’t get drunk often, but he was often a bit of a belligerent drunk. He seemed rather subdued however, and Wilbur would take the win. They were all lounging in one room, and Schlatt was spouting in the corner, like the sore loser he was and Wilbur had been poking the proverbial bear until Niki had cut.

"Aw, c'mon Niki, it was just a game," He cajoled, slinging an arm around her shoulder. She was good at playing innocent, but was just as devious as the rest of them, really. He was surprised she hadn't managed to win over both of them. Sally either, honestly. "Schlatt betrayed Slime, that's just how the game is"

"No," Niki said, ducking out from under his arm "The game is supposed to be to try and win. NOT to try and be the person standing last,"

Wilbur blinked in surprise. Oh. Niki was actually upset. "I'm...sorry?"

Niki huffed "Wilbur, it's no fun when you and Schlatt get all competitive. The rest of us are tired of it,"

Wilbur looked over at Sally, who had been sitting on one of the beds writing...something down in her journal. Wilbur had bought her a journal on a whim after she mentioned she used to journal as a kid and he was happy to see her using it.

He was less happy with the look on her face. She was entirely unimpressed, levying him with a flat, disappointed stare that made Wilbur feel about ten inches tall. Fuck. She was disappointed in him.

"God, get over it," Schlatt grumbled from his corner "You're all just fucking sour about losing,"

"Oh shut up Schlatt," Sally snapped, finally joining in "You and Wilbur made this a competition with each other, when it was supposed to be fun for all of us,"

"Whatever," He said, rolling his eyes. Behind Wilbur, Niki slipped out the door- he didn't blame her, since it was shaping up to be a particularly nasty screaming match between Sally and Schlatt. He'd apologize to her and Charlie later, to keep the peace.

Schlatt scoffed. "You're just mad because Wilbur wasn't giving you all his attention. News flash, Sally- there is more to life than fucking romance. Some of us have ambition,"

"You think-? God, you're so stupid. It's not about me and Wilbur. It's-it's how you've been acting, It was like you didn't give a shit about us!" Sally snapped "and Ambition? Really? It's a endeddamn game,"

Schlatt tried to get to his feet and managed but swayed dangerously "Oh don't be a bitch Sally, it was just a bit of good fun. Worried that I'm gonna steal your boyfriend?"

"Are you-You're fucking drunk Schlatt," Sally exclaimed, in disbelief "Get the fuck out of here, you bastard. I won't talk to you until you're sober,"

"I'm not leaving just because-" Schlatt started, taking a step toward Sally. Wilbur didn't realize he'd moved until he was between them, one hand out toward each of them. Schlatt was forced to stop short at the sudden interruption.

"Schlatt," He said, trying to keep his tone even despite his pounding heart. He was a few good inches taller than Schlatt, but he wasn't entirely sure that he'd win that fight if it got

physical.. Sally was to his back, but he resisted the urge to look back at her “C’mon man. Go take a walk. Sober up before you saying anything else you’ll regret in the morning,”

Schlatt stared at him for a beat in the thick silence and for a moment Wilbur was worried he was going to get physical. Then, Schlatt stepped back. “Fucking- fine. Fine. Whatever, loverboy. I’ll just go fuck myself I guess,”

A moment later he was out the door and Wilbur let out a long breath.

He turned around to face Sally. “Are you alright?” he asked quietly, even though Schlatt hadn’t even gotten that close to her. He reached a hand out to grab hers. They were warm, like always, but rough with callouses along her fingers.

Sally’s face softened for a moment, as she squeezed his hand once. “It takes more than a drunk Schlatt to rattle me,” Sally assured him. “We’ve dished worse out to each other.

Wilbur smiled at her, tension leaking from his shoulders. Of course she was fine. He was probably more upset than she was about the whole thing. Sally and Schlatt’s screaming matches were par for the course, obviously, but something about this had... unsettled him. He’d seen Schlatt drunk before, and certainly belligerent, but he’d looked angry tonight in a way that Wilbur hadn’t really seen from him. He wasn’t scared- just concerned for Schlatt. It just seemed unlike him.

“But,” Sally said, dropping his hand, “That doesn’t mean I’m not still pissed at you,”

He grimaced as she leveled him with a flat look. He sank down on the bed across from her. He’d been hoping Schlatt’s little tantrum would be enough to make her ease up, at least for the evening. That had been purely wishful thinking of course. Sally could certainly hold a grudge if she chose. “I’m not sure what you want me to say,”

“You could start with a sorry,” Sally said, arching eyebrows “And not that half-hearted one you gave Niki. You need to mean it,”

Wilbur winced. Fair enough. It hadn’t sounded convincing. “I *am* sorry, Sally. Truly,”

Sally shook her head “No, Wilbur, you aren’t,”

He was lost. Wilbur had no clue what the fuck she was talking about. “Sally, I-”

“Why are you sorry,” Sally asked firmly. She didn’t seem angry, half-smile particularly, not how she was angry at Schlatt, but she also wasn’t happy with him. “Tell me,”

Wilbur blinked at her. “I’m...I never meant for everyone else’s feelings to be hurt,”

“That’s not an apology,” Sally corrected, leaning toward him. “You might not have meant to hurt anyone, you were having fun, but Wil, you have to be sorry. Intentions don’t matter. Neither does a half hearted sorry,”

“I’ve never been very good at apologies,” Wilbur admitted, giving her a half smile. HE really did feel bad about hurting her feelings. “But I’m sorry that I got too wrapped up in my

competition,"

He wasn't sure if that was what she wanted and based on her expression, he wasn't exactly right, but she sighed, and moved to sit beside him. "We'll have to work on that, but, I'll take it for now,"

"Thank you for putting up with me. I'm sorry that I'm an ass" He said quietly, wrapping an arm around her, to pull her against his side. "I love you,"

"Hmm," She said, leaning into him "I suppose I love you too, even when you are being an ass,"

"And for that, I am eternally grateful," he murmured "My family was never good at apologies. Or at not being assholes. I think it might be in my blood,"

"Nah," Sally said, "That's bullshit. You're your person Wilbur. You have always made that, clear, faults and all. That's you, Wilbur. "

Wilbur sometimes felt like he was choking on the affection he felt for Sally. He pulled her into his arms, burying his face in her hair. "You're a fucking sap," He muttered.

"Says you" she retorted, though she only moved to wrap her arms around him. Whatever he'd done, they'd get through it together.

Schlatt sobered up by morning, and pulled Sally to the side they checked out of the inn. Wilbur wasn't sure what he said, exactly, but it was a sufficient enough apology since Sally seemed a bit brighter when she returned to his side, slipping under his arm with an innocent look.

Wilbur had apologized to Niki and Charlie, though Charlie seemed less concerned about it than Niki and Schlatt had already apologized (as much as Schlatt ever apologized to them)

And it was mostly forgotten. They left the modded server. It was probably for the best, Wilbur knew, but it had still been fun.

"Where are we going next,?" Sally asked as they approached the exit of the server. It was crowded as always and Wilbur was glad. The crowds have prevented a repeat of the awkward encounter on the first day.

Schlatt grinned, spinning to face them. "Boys, I thought you'd never ask. How do you all feel about potions?"

Apparently, Schlatt had contacts in some server that specialized in underground fights. Brutal, raw, and definitely not the safest, but it was discrete, and apparently, there was a market for potions. Wilbur was good at potions- Phil had made sure that he knew how to make every basic potion and many of the less common ones.

Sally also had a steady hand for potion making, and Schlatt, surprisingly, knew a lot about the nether ingredients that went into potions.

So, they set up shop in some random server Wilbur had never heard of and started brewing potions.

Apparently, there had been some sort of... disagreement between the previous potion sellers that had resulted in all parties pretty much destroying each other, leaving an open market. Schlatt had told them the detail wasn't important.

Even Sally got nothing else out of him, but, nonetheless, they took over the empty shop front, and built three small cabins a couple hundred blocks outside town. It was a bit of a walk, but worth the privacy.

The path, thanks in part to Charlie's dedication to whatever task you gave him, and Wilbur's prior knowledge of specialized outdoor lighting (Phil had at least taught him how to pretty well monster proof any area) the walk to and from was safe enough, even at night.

They weren't getting rich off potions, but it was steady income, and there were enough shops, and fights, and the server had some nice areas to explore, so Wilbur was happy enough. It... it felt enough like home to him.

Even if he was ignoring the communicator at the bottom of the bag, even if he still sometimes felt guilty... it was good. Wilbur was happy, despite his family.

(He definitely never thought about them. Never thought of a joke to tell Tommy, or learned a horrifying fact to tell Phil, only to remember that he had no plans to see them again. Ever, preferably. He was happy without them. Completely)

The night was nice enough. Wilbur and Niki had done the selling for that night's fight while Sally kept up stock. Niki had already walked home, escorted by Schlatt who'd used his night off to watch the fights.

Well, Schlatt insisted it wasn't an escort. He said that he was protecting the money she'd made, but that was just Schlatt's language. Wilbur often thought of writing a book; "How to Speak Jackass: a Guide to JSchlatt,"

Wilbur had wanted to walk around the town looking at shops. He hadn't had a chance and he was itching to get some new guitar strings. He had some extra, but it was running low, with how much they all asked him to play. Really though, it was just an excuse to walk around with Sally without the others bothering them for once.

And it was nice, even if the shops were closed and the streets empty, lit by bright lanterns, Sally's head leaned against his shoulder.

"I love you," Wilbur said suddenly. He'd said it before, and he knew he'd say it again. He'd tell her that he loved her until he couldn't speak if that's what it took, but now there was

something desperate about it. "I love you. Let's get married,"

"What?" Sally said, "Wilbur what are you-"

"Let's get *married*," he repeated, clasping both of her hands in his. If Technoblade was searching for him, if his family was hounding at his feet he needed- he needed something to tie him to his life. His life with Sally and all their friends. His life as Wilbur Soot. "Right now,"

"Right now?" Sally said, green eyes wide "Wilbur, love, it's the middle of the night-"

"And?" Wilbur said, pulling her close so that he could cup her face "We can get married right now, the stars as our witness, and-"

"No," Sally said, pressing a finger to his lips to quiet him. He blinked in surprise, shoulder falling as fear pooled in his gut. She didn't want to marry him? Was she ending things? Was-. "I *will* marry you Wilbur, but not in the middle of the night wearing these old clothes. We don't even have *rings*. And besides, our friends will be angry if we do it without them. I already promised Charlie he could be the flower girl,"

That was a fair point, and now that Wilbur thought for a moment. He did want the others there, standing with them. Wilbur wanted the entire world to know that he loved her. "Tomorrow then," Wilbur said, "I can find the rings, you can go into town, buy yourself whatever dress you want. Charlie can get flowers and we can do it tomorrow night. I can't wait a minute longer, Sally. I love you, and I want the entire world to know it. So, Sally, will you marry me tomorrow night?"

Sally studied him for a moment, then laughed, throwing her head back. "Yes, Wilbur Soot, you crazy bastard, I'll marry you tomorrow night," Wilbur thought she'd never look more beautiful.

Wilbur let out a whoop of joy, uncaring that they were in the middle of an empty market, and that people were probably trying to sleep in the buildings around them. He wrapped his arms around Sally's waist and lifted her off the ground, spinning her around, unable to contain his joy. "Thank ender," he said "When I thought you were saying no, I was already figuring out what lava pit was the closest,"

"Dramatic" Sally teased, "Dramatic bastard. As if I'd ever really say no,"

"Hmm, I don't know," Wilbur said, only half teasing "I'm a man of many faults. I'm an asshole, I can be selfish, I certainly don't have much money to my name, and my family is absolutely batshit insane,"

"Hmm, it almost sounds like you're trying to talk me out of getting married," Sally said, pressing closer, looking up at him. "But luckily for you, I am very, very stubborn and I'm afraid it's too late to change my mind, even if you are a bit of an asshole,"

"My family really is crazy," He insisted. He'd not shared much about them, really. Not when he didn't plan on going back. Not even if he missed Tommy and his quips and wondered if

Techno and Sally would get along.

"Hmm, I think maybe I should be offended," Sally said "Considering we're both a part of the same little family. And it really might hurt Niki's feelings."

It took Wilbur a moment to realize what she was talking about, what he meant by Niki and-

Wilbur pulled her close to him again. "You're too good for me Sally," He said and hoped she'd pretend that she didn't hear the waver in his voice.

"Hmm, you're probably right," She teased, pushing off his chest. "But you're the best one to me,"

"You're just trying to make me cry," Wilbur accused lightly, letting her out of his grasp, though Sally kept her hand intertwined with his.

"Maybe," Sally said "But you deserve it for literally proposing to me out of nowhere,"

"Fair enough," Wilbur admitted, though he wasn't particularly afraid to cry in front of her "I guess it wasn't the romantic proposal you dreamed of as a child,"

Was it not enough? Now that his immediate rush of adrenaline was gone, Wilbur realized that- well, despite his declaration of undying love it was pretty lame. He hadn't even gotten a ring.

"Oh don't start that," Sally said, elbowing his side. "Maybe not, but I never even dreamed of getting married as a kid, so you far surpassed my non-existent standards. And I said yes, didn't I, you idiot? We're getting married tomorrow now, whether you like it or not,"

"Okay, okay," Wilbur agreed, holding up his free hand in mock surrender, as a smile played at his lips "Got it. I'm now being held hostage for my own wedding,"

"Damn right you are," Sally agreed. "Now, let's go tell our friends that they have like, sixteen hours to plan a wedding,"

Wilbur slept maybe three of those sixteen hours and spent the rest of them frantically trying to get ready for his wedding. Schlatt had put on a big show of being irritated when they'd woken him up but had also immediately handed Sally all the money he had on him.

"Go buy a dress or something. I don't know. You look like shit in those old rags, and I will not take part in a wedding where the bride's clothes look like that,"

It was as close to affection as Schlatt got, so Wilbur was just glad to have his blessing. Niki had immediately berated them for not giving her more notice so that she could make a cake, and Wilbur had to restrain Charlie from running off into the mob-infested woods to immediately begin picking flowers.

Wilbur, for his part, attempted to sleep, and at the first rays of dawn, set out to make the rings.

Schlatt, by nature of being Schlatt, delegated himself to “help”. Wilbur wasn’t sure it was actually much help, but he appreciated the sentiment, even if Schlatt was being a fucking asshole.

“Listen, Wilbur, buddy, I hate to tell you, but there is no way you’re going to find any sort of gem today,” Schlatt said, as Wilbur shifted his pickaxe from hand to hand “But this whole area is too close to spawn and too close to town. Everyone will have mined it dry,”

Schlatt was right of course. That didn’t make it easier. Buying a ring was out of the question- money would be tight and it would be impossible to get them the right size so last minute. Making them was the only option.

Wilbur sighed and let it slip back into his inventory. “What do you suggest then Schlatt?”

“I dunno dude, maybe fucking, plan ahead better next time,” Schlatt grumbled, even as he dug in his pockets. “On an unrelated note, how do you feel about Lapis?”

It was a pretty enough gem, not nearly as valuable as diamonds or emeralds. He’d never really seen it used in much jewelry, though, to be fair, he hadn’t exactly studied jewelry. Technoblade was partial to solid gold, and Phil had his green motif.

“That’ll work,” Wilbur agreed. The blue gem would look pretty enough on Sally’s hand and Wilbur himself would probably only wear a plain band. A band of what, though, was shaping up to be the problem.

He didn’t really have much gold that he could afford to smelt, and it was already mid-morning. The rings would be nowhere near done by the time of the wedding, which was set to start an hour or so before sunset.

It wasn’t like he could just give her a rock, or tie it to her wrist with string.

String.

“I’ve got it!” Wilbur exclaimed, shooting up from his seat.

“Fucking ender,” Schlatt muttered, flinching “Give a guy some warning before you start yelling?”

Wilbur ignored him in favor of digging through the pile of bags and supplies in the corner. They hadn’t fully sorted everyone’s things, now that the cabins were built. He found his bag beneath Charlie’s odd collection of sticks and dried mud cakes and rummaged around until he found his spare guitar strings. They were made of extremely durable metal, but thin enough to twine together.

“A wire?” Schlatt said, sounding skeptical “C’mon dude- “

"It's my guitar strings, fuck off," Wilbur snapped "It's sentimental. A magical stone, and part of my guitar,"

"That's fucking sappy," Schlatt said, but still handed over a very shiny piece of Lapis "I'm sure Sally will love it. Never fucking understood romance,"

"Not sure why," Wilbur shot back instinctually "Your charming personality just has people flocking to date you,"

"Fuck you Soot," Schlatt groused and Wilbur ignored him. He had rings to make.

A few hours later, Wilbur was wearing a suit jacket that he'd borrowed from Schlatt, that pulled slightly at the sleeves, his best vest, and shirt, and had a flower stuck through a buttonhole that Charlie had practically thrust at him.

He was standing beside Schlatt, at the edge of a lake near the town. He'd been ousted from the room so that Nikki could help Sally get ready, and Charlie had spent the day collecting flowers. Charlie was now standing beside Schlatt, a few flowers stuck to his skin, probably using his slime abilities. . Niki emerged out of the tree line first, wearing the nicest dress she owned, with flowers tucked behind her ear. "Turn around," She instructed as she came up to Wilbur. "Turn around- we want it to be a surprise!"

Wilbur turned to face the water, swallowing hard. He felt halfway sick- it was a little bit like waiting for Phil to come home after Wilbur had brought Tommy home.

Except, it was different. Even with every book he'd read, none of them had ever actually gotten close to the feeling. It was nerves, it was joy, it was something else entirely, all encompassed by love. Wilbur thought if he felt anything else his chest might just split open.

He wished Tommy were there.

The thought rose unbidden, unexpected. He wished Tommy were there. He... he wished Phil was. Tubbo. Maybe even Technoblade.

The thought was so sudden it nearly toppled him.

He didn't miss them. He missed what they once were. He missed the old versions of those people that Wilbur might have-

Then, there was a hand on his back, familiar and gentle as Schlatt began to speak. He spun around and-

Whatever Schlatt was saying, it was lost. Any anxiety was gone, any thoughts of his family vanished, replaced with excitement and joy, melting like winter turning into spring, as Sally stood there. She was wearing a beautiful dress, a gentle pink one, that had been in a shop window they'd passed by the night before. She was holding a bouquet of flowers and a circlet of flowers sat on her head- blues and whites and pinks. But none of that mattered, really. She

could have been standing there in rags, covered in mud and Wilbur still would have been just as overjoyed.

"You look beautiful," he whispered, taking her free hand in his, almost reverently.

Wilbur wasn't a religious man- he didn't worship primes, or ender, or any gods that were the supposed controllers of the world. He'd never quite understood why people believed in a higher power, why they fell over themselves to give up their lives to a god. He didn't understand why they compromised themselves so completely, but looking at Sally, the sun making her hair look like a smoldering flame, he understood why men fell to their knees when they worshiped their gods.

"You don't look so bad yourself," She whispered back.

"Guys, c'mon stop starin' at each other and- Fuck!" Niki had stamped on Schlatt's foot, and it was enough to startle a laugh out of both Sally and Wilbur. It didn't shatter the moment, no somehow, that made it better. His heart, already overflowing, somehow swelled with more affection for his friends, bastards that they were.

"I didn't take you for a voyeur," Willbur teased, grinning at Schlatt.

"It's a big change," Sally agreed "Normally he hates it when we even look at each other, but I mean-"

"Shut up, Shut up both of you, and just- get married," Schlatt said, face a burning red.

They laughed again, basking in the sunset glow. Their vows were simple- well, as simple as Wilbur could get, honestly. He'd wished he'd had more time, even when Nikki teased him for being long-winded. But really, he couldn't say enough. Sally wasn't perfect, but she was perfect for him. There weren't enough words to say to correctly express how he felt about her.

Sally's vows were short but Wilbur didn't care, they were sincere. Then, they exchanged rings made of Lapis and guitar string and then they kissed and- and they were married.

"I now pronounce you, husband and wife," Charlie proclaimed- he hadn't really officiated, but someone had to say it. "Congrats you two crazy kids,"

Wilbur hardly heard him.

Married. They are married now. He grinned at Sally, unable to contain himself. Behind them, Niki, Schlatt, and Charlie pelted them with flower petals and cheers.

"I love you, Sally," Wilbur said, and fuck, maybe he was crying, but that was okay because Sally was too.

"I love you too," She said, smiling up at him, with shining eyes.

Niki hated the server they were on..

Wilbur wasn't stupid- as happy as he was, he could tell Niki wasn't a fan- not of the potions or of the people that they sold them to. Wilbur tried to help her. He dragged her out to the lake and took her into town with him when he performed, singing stupid songs until she laughed, but he could tell this wasn't where Niki's heart was.

He hadn't brought it up with her- perhaps that made him a coward- because he didn't want it to be a tipping point. If he tiptoed around it maybe it would go away. That worked just as well this time as it had when he started ignoring the issues with Phil and Tommy and Techno.

All that to say he wasn't exactly surprised when Niki pulled him aside one morning while Schlatt and Sally were brewing potions and Charlie was tidying the shop.

"Will, can I talk to you for a minute?" Niki asked quietly. She was wringing her hands a bit- a nervous habit that she'd never quite kicked.

"Sure," Wilbur said, gently sitting down the crate of potions he was holding "What's up Niki? Need help with something,"

Wilbur figured that there wasn't. He wasn't stupid, not when Niki was looking anywhere but him.

"Wil," She said, not quite meeting his eye "Will, I- I'm leaving,"

That didn't make it much easier to hear, but Wilbur still forced himself to smile. Niki deserved all the happiness in the world, even if it was away from them. He let out a long breath "I'm not surprised. I could tell- you weren't happy here Niki. I figured it was only a matter of time till you left,"

"I- I need to go out on my own. All of you are really happy here, and you and Sally are married, and it's not that I don't love you all, and you're my best friend Wilbur but-"

"Hey," Wilbur said, grabbing her shoulders gently "Niki, I'm not mad. I'd never hold it against you, needing to strike out and find yourself. It'd make me a hell of a hypocrite, wouldn't it?"

"I don't want to leave you all but- but I can't stay here. The things we do here aren't what I want to do. And I want to try so many things!" Niki exclaimed looking at him with wide eyes, practically begging him not to be angry.

"Niki Niachu," Wilbur said, swallowing down his own sadness "Look at me and listen well. You are brilliant and talented, and one of the kindest people I've ever met. You deserve to go out there and make this world your own, in whatever capacity you choose. You will always have a place with Sally and I, no matter how long or how far you've gone, but you deserve to do whatever it is that your heart desires,"

Niki threw her arms around Wilbur, hugging him briefly before stepping back. "Thank you Wil, I knew that you'd understand. I didn't want to tell Schlatt before I told you, or anyone, I- Thank you,"

"Course Ms. Niachu," Wilbur said, giving her his most shining smile "Anything for you,"

Niki told Charlie next and he took it pretty well, considering. He only got a little upset, but calmed down when Niki promised to write to him. She owed up to Sally and Schlatt last. Sally, of course, took it well, because Sally was never one to hold people back. She didn't cry, but her eyes shone suspiciously when she pulled Niki into a hug.

Schlatt took it as well as expected. Which meant that he pretended he didn't give a shit that Niki was reading, but Wilbur found him drinking with red-rimmed eyes later, while Sally helped Niki pack.

Wilbur didn't comment on the fact that Schlatt shoved an entire pouch of diamonds at Niki right before she left the next morning. "Don't fucking come crawling back once you blow it all," he grumbled, crossing his arms. "I'm not your fucking sugar daddy,"

Niki just smiled, and gave Schlatt a hug, to his obvious surprise "Thank you Schlatt,"

"Yeah whatever," Schlatt grumbled "Get outta here, we aren't saving your ass if you get caught in the dark either,"

It was early morning, but that was Schlatt's line in the sand. He'd already give more emotion than Wilbur had expected him to.

"Have you seen JSchlatt?" Wilbur asked as Sally ducked into the potion room. "I haven't seen him since Charlie left last night,"

"No, I haven't," Sally said, and Wilbur could hear the frown in her voice, as well as the worry. Schlatt hadn't taken Charlie's departure well, since it was less than a week after Niki left. "I checked his house,

Charlie and Schlatt had been offered invites to a private SMP that had just started- a tantalizing offer that Charlie couldn't turn down. Wilbur had expected Schlatt to take it, but he hadn't/ When Charlie told them he had. Schlatt had... Well, he hadn't taken it well. He hadn't shouted, but his barbs were venomous. He hadn't even seen Charlie off, heading out with the group to go to the SMP that night. Wilbur assumed he was hiding in his house, drinking. Apparently not.

"I've almost finished this batch of potions. I'll go find him if you don't mind finishing it up," Wilbur said, glancing over his shoulder.

"You just don't want to work," Sally protested but took over for him "Go. Make sure the dumbass hasn't drowned himself in booze or gotten eaten by a zombie,"

“Yes Ma’am,” Wilbur said with a salute. Sally rolled her eyes but smiled. Wilbur pressed a quick kiss to her temple and then headed out the door.

“Now, if I were JSchlatt, where would I be?” Wilbur muttered quietly to himself. Schlatt probably walked toward town to drink, so perhaps he’d passed out in the shop if he didn’t want anyone to find him.

Wilbur checked his inventory- he didn’t want to accidentally walk out with the potions supplies on the off chance he got jumped. He only had a sword, shield, and water bucket, so he was probably fine.

Wilbur hummed quietly under his breath as he made his way down the path. He was worried about Schlatt, but, once he adapted, he’d be fine. He wasn’t exactly good at change, Wilbur had found unless he was the one driving. The bastard was a control freak- Wilbur could be too, sometimes- but Schlatt was unbearable sometimes. Wilbur usually just told him to fuck off.

Wilbur was about halfway there when he heard something to his left.

For a second, it sounded almost like a zombie groan, but no, it was daytime. Zombies couldn’t be out, not with how much light was out. “If someone is out there, I can hear you. Just come on out,” Wilbur called firmly. He didn’t draw his sword- no need to incite violence.

For a moment Wilbur thought that perhaps he was shouting into empty woods, or that whoever was out there wasn’t going to answer him, but then;

“W’bur?” Someone slurred.

Shit. Well. He found Schlatt.

“Schlatt?” Wilbur called, as he scrambled down into the ditch on the left side of the road. “That you man?”

Schlatt just groaned in response. He was laying on his side in the ditch, and Wilbur could see at least one bottle clutched in his hand- ender knew how many were scattered around.

“Oh man,” Wilbur said, “Schlatt, big guy, c’mon, we gotta get you up”

“Fuck off,” Schlatt slurred, nearly unintelligible. “ L’ve me ‘lone,”

“No can do,” Wilbur said, crouching beside him “I gotta get you home man, or I let Sally come get you,”

Chlatt took a moment to process his words, but eventually his face screwed up “Sally’s mean,”

“Yeah, you’d much rather I help you home, right?” Wilbur said “Now, C’mon, arm ‘round my shoulders. Yeah, that’s it up we go,”

It took a couple of tries and Wilbur nearly fell a few times, but he finally got Schlatt to his feet. "Now, come on, I'm not dragging your ass home, you'll have to walk with me,"

"I d'n wanna go back" Schlatt slurred, leaning heavily on Wilbur. "'S lonely,"

"Yeah, yeah, I know. Sally and I are just terrible company," Wilbur said "I should be offended, man. Really, like what the fuck,"

"Shut up," Schlatt said "My head fucking hurts. You're a fucking dick,"

"Alright, alright,"

It took some work but they made it back to Schlatt's house, where Wilbur forced him to drink a glass of water.

"Fuck you," Schlatt muttered, for the millionth time. Wilbur was trying not to take it personally. Schlatt liked to drink but Wilbur had never, ever seen him so far gone. "SHoulda just left me in the ditch,"

"You would've been eaten by zombies, you idiot," Wilbur chastised "What, did you want me to leave you for dead?"

"Yeah," Schlatt muttered "'S what I deserve, 'pparently,"

Wilbur had no idea what to say to that. "Stop that," He chastised gently "Go the fuck to sleep. You'll feel better when you wake up,"

Actually, he'd probably have a killer headache, but at least maybe he'd stop talking out of his head. Schlatt muttered something unintelligible, but did fall asleep, or at least into unconsciousness, so Wilbur wasn't fighting him anymore. It was enough of a win in his book.

Schlatt the next day, was unfortunately just angry. Terribly belligerent and pissed off. Sally, in retaliation, poured all his alcohol out. They got into it while Wilbur was brewing a batch of healing potions. He could hear them screaming, but by dinner, Schlatt had calmed down and Sally had too.

It was better for everyone if Wilbur just stayed out of their fights.

Life moved on. They tried to keep Schlatt from drinking, with varied success- he was always in a better mood sober- and made potions to sell, with a demand that rose every day.

Wilbur pretended that he didn't miss Niki and Charlie terribly too. He was happy for them, truly, and the be the biggest hypocrite he knew if he wasn't but-

But it wasn't the same. It was still wonderful, having Sally with him, and Schlatt, despite his increasingly belligerent behavior. But Wilbur missed what they had.

It made him miss... well it didn't make him miss Tommy and Tubbo and Phil, but it made him miss what they'd once been..

What was it about Wilbur that made everyone fucking leave him.

“Nothing, Wil,” Sally told him, when he voiced as much to her one night, her curled against his chest in the small cabin they’d built. “They aren’t leaving you. “

Wilbur wished that were true.

“You’re the worst,” Sally snapped, glaring at Wilbur “Actually,”

“Sally,” Wilbur started “ I’m sorry-”

“No, no,” She said, scowling “You’re the worst, Wilbur Soot. *How* did this even happen?

Wilbur swallowed back a nervous laugh. “Sally, please, be reasonable-”

“Reasonable?” She snapped, voice rising in pitch. Wilbur winced. That might not have been the best word choice, admittedly “Reasonable? I leave for a day to go collect sand, and you turned a fox into a baby!”

Okay, that was...that was a fair point. “I didn’t exactly do it on purpose,” Wilbur argued, because he hadn’t, thank you very much. “There was an incident with the potions. On an unrelated note entirely, we are out of half the potions I brewed today,”

Sally took a deep breath “Is that supposed to help things?”

Wilbur chose to ignore that question “I know it’s unexpected Sally, but look, look at her, she’s so small!”

The baby in his arms was tiny, wrapped in one of Wilbur’s spare sweaters because that was all Wilbur could think to grab when he realized that he was in possession of a human baby. A human baby, that had once been the tiny fox baby he’d brought inside, because it was injured, adn cute, and he just fed it a golden apple. That had been enough to perk it up, so it crashed through the potions he had stored and instead of burning up from magical overexposure, when the fumes cleared, there was a crying human baby on the floor where the box had been.

Well, mostly human.

“Wilbur I don’t want to-” but he cut her off, gently, handing the baby out to her. She took the little one without hesitation, and Wilbur watched her face soften almost immediately, which, fair. It was the cutest baby Wilbur had ever had the privilege of laying his eyes on “It’s still got the ears,”

“He also has a tail,” Wilbur corrected “And very sharp teeth. He’s a bit of a biter, watch your fingers,”

“We can’t keep the baby Wilbur,” Sally argued, even as she held him closer to her chest “We’re too young, and we don’t know if the potion-”

"We don't," Wilbur agreed, though he personally hoped that it wouldn't ever go away. That Wilbur had- that somehow he'd done an impossible feat of magic that would last forever. The incident had happened less than six hours before, but Wilbur was already attached. "But this is a child Sally, we can't leave him here. Even if this is temporary,"

"I know," Sally said. She hadn't taken her eyes off the baby, since Wilbur handed him to her. Sally's voice was suddenly emotional "I knew the second I saw him- oh, he's so small Wilbur,"

"I know Sally," he said fondly, coming to stand behind her, resting his chin on the top of her head, as he looked down at his wife and the baby. "He needs a name"

"He does," Sally agreed, staring down at the child, who was sleeping peacefully. For a moment there was silence as they both thought "What about Fundy?"

"Fundy?" Wilbur repeated. It was a strange name, but it rolled off the tongue. Looking down at the baby, with a soft tuft of red hair it fit. "It's perfect,"

"It is," Sally agreed, leaving back into Wilbur's chest. She smiled, "He is,"

Wilbur smiled, though she couldn't see it. Fundy. His son. Wilbur hadn't believed that he could quite love anyone or anything like this. His heart felt both too big and too small, so full it could burst. This was his child. Perhaps not traditionally, or at a time he expected it, but it didn't matter.

"I'm still angry at you," Sally whispered quietly "This was reckless Wilbur, I know it was an accident but you created a person. That's... "

"I know," Wilbur assured her, though he still wasn't sure why she was so upset. Things had worked out fine. "I'm sorry. But look at him. Isn't he beautiful? Our Fundy,"

Sally stiffened slightly for a moment, before letting out a small sigh. "Our Fundy" She agreed affectionately. She tilted her head up to look at him, smiling slyly. "You get to tell Schlatt though,"

Schlatt returned from his trip to the nether markets two days later. In that time, Wilbur and Sally had roughly cobbled together some clothes for Fundy, a makeshift crib, and a sling that they could use to keep Fundy tied to their chests while they worked.

They'd spent the first two nights anxious that Fundy would turn back into a fox, and Wilbur still couldn't shake the nagging anxiety, but Fundy seemed no more foxlike than he'd been when the incident happened, so they decided to assume that it was permanent. Wilbur hoped it was.

Fundy had been, so far, an easy baby. Wilbur didn't have much experience with actual babies- Tommy and Tubbo were well into the toddler stage before he knew them. Phil had said that he and Technoblade had been terrors the first few weeks they were at home, both screaming

all night, and when one calmed, the other would start up. Phil always said that if they ever had kids they'd get it back tenfold. Fundy had hardly cried, though, mostly a happy, curious baby. .

Wilbur pushed the thought of Phil away as he picked the cooing baby up from his bed. Sally was sleeping and had woken up twice in the night to feed Fundy. A knock sounded at the door. "Hey, get the fuck out here, I need to talk to you two,".

He didn't call out to Schlatt, so as not to disturb Sally in the small cabin, but made his way to the door with Fundy cradled close to his chest.

"Sally's sleeping," Wilbur said, in lieu of greeting, as he stepped outside of the house. Schlatt wasn't exactly known for being quiet. "I don't want to disturb her."

Schlatt was far from a stupid man- in fact, Wilbur would say he was one of the smartest, more cunning men Wilbur had ever met. However, he was gaping at Fundy, mouth open like a fish.

"You alright, man?" Wilbur asked. He obviously knew what was up- Fundy was a bit of a surprise, but it was funny watching Schlatt's brain try and compute the information

"That's a fucking baby," Schlatt finally managed, sounding strangled "What the fuck Wilbur?"

"Hey, watch your language around Fundy, motherfucker," Wilbur teased. "I don't want your vulgar language corrupting my child-Sally would be so pissed if his first work was a curse,"

Schlatt made a choking noise. "I was only gone- I was gone less than a week! When the fuck did you get a child? I'm pretty sure that's- that's not how that works, the timeline is a little longer"

"Are you sure?" Wilbur joked "I mean when was the last time you ever met someone with a baby,"

Schlatt scowled.

"Okay, alright. Fine," Wilbur said with a laugh "A baby fox broke into the potions room and shattered a ton of bottles- he turned into a baby then,"

Schlatt stared at him like he'd grown a second head "Alright, fine then, don't tell me where you got the baby. Just don't- wait- Wilbur stop-"

Schlatt took a step back as Wilbur held Fundy out towards him "Oh C'mon, just hold him, man. He needs to get to know his Uncle Schlatt,"

Schlatt froze, eyes wide, and that was enough opportunity for Wilbur to place Fundy in Schlatt's arms. Instinctively, Schlatt took what was handed to him, before he realized that he was holding a baby.

“Wilbur,” Schlatt said, as a note of panic rose in his voice “Wilbur I don’t want to hold it. It’s waking up Wilbur I don’t fucking know-”

“Just support his head,” Wilbur instructed, “You’ve got it there man,”

“I hate you,” Schlatt said, glancing between them, “Wilbur, take it back,”

“Nah,” Wilbur said, grinning at the sight of Schlatt looking terrified, holding a tiny baby. He wished he had something on him to take a picture with. “I think I’m good,”

Schlatt made a noise of protest. “I don’t like babies, dude! They cry and shit and scream! And they’re so fucking small and boring. Who would even want one?”

“Hey, don’t insult my child like that,” Wilbur protested, frowning. Schlatt didn’t really mean it of course, and it was probably the panic in his eyes talking, but still. That was his baby, thank you very much.

Fundy didn’t seem to like it much either and clamped down on the fingers that Schlatt had just a little too close to his mouth.

“Shit!” Schlatt screeched, yanking his hand back. “He-he fucking bit me!”

Wilbur laughed, finally taking Fundy back from Schlatt who looked borderline murderous. “Yeah, he does that sometimes. My little champion, with his sharp teeth,”

“I’m never touching that again,” Schlatt snapped “Never again,”

“Okay,” Wilbur agreed, though he was pretty sure that Schlatt was just bullshitting. He was all talk, most of the time. “So what did you need this morning, Schlatt?”

Schlatt still looked a little off-kilter from meeting Fundy, so Wilbur wasn’t surprised when it took him a few moments to answer. “Oh, before your demon-baby bit me? I came over here to say I got the shit we needed from the nether market,”

“Brilliant. Wilbur said “We stayed closed the last couple of days, just because it was a little difficult with Fundy, but now that you’re back we should be able to reopen the stall. Before that people were asking for lots of potions that require netherwart,”

“Sounds like business is booming pal,” Schlatt agreed “Why don’t you get Sally and then we can go work on potions and talk business- just don’t let your baby fuck things up,”

“I make no promises,” Wilbur joked “He’s mine after all,”

“I’m more worried about Sally’s influence,” Schlatt grumbled. “But I’m going to wrap my hand. Try not to be too long, I’m a busy man,”

The potions work was going well. Nether ingredients tended to be a bit more finicky and required more concentration. That was why Wilbur was holding Fundy and Schlatt was

sitting beside him while Sally added them in.

“What is it about bars and gossip?” Schlatt asked rhetorically. He’d been chatting about his trip and all the people he’d either made friends with or pissed off while he was gone. “They always have the wildest fucking rumors,”

“Ooh, enlighten me Schlatt,” Wilbur asked “You know I love a good bit of gossip,”

“I know, it’s like talking to a twelves year old girl,” Schlatt said wrinkling his nose in disgust, “But, I suppose I can feed your gossip problem, you weirdo. Anyway, I was at this bar right, grabbing a quick drink minding my own business-”

“For once” Wilbur interjected. Schlatt glared at him

“I was minding my own business, when these dudes came in, practically yelling and sat down next to me. Now, I’m not a nosy person-”

“Bullshit,” Sally muttered from across the room.

Schlatt threw up his hands “Do you two want to hear the fucking story or not?”

“Sorry,” Wilbur said, not bothering to hide his smile. “Go on,”

“Anyway, I hear them talking about Technoblade. Now, normally I don’t give a shit about champions and such, but they were being so loud it was hard not to hear ‘em. Have you guys ever heard of Technoblade? The champion? He kicked ass in Hypixel, then Skyblock? Apparently, he’s got some apprentice now, that just as fucking good as he is,”

Wilbur’s blood had already turned ice-cold in his veins as he listened to Schlatt.

“Technoblade isn’t a champion,” Wilbur bit out before he could stop himself. Fundy was the only thing that kept him from shouting in rage. “I mean, he is, but he’s a killer Schlatt. A weapon in mortal skin. He’s brutal, bloodthirsty, and was trained by the Angel of Death himself,”

“Oh come on,” Schlatt said with a scoff. “Don’t tell me you believe in the Angel of Death! Those are just stories meant to scare kids, and prevent dumbass teens from going to war,”

Wilbur thinks about the blood on his father’s sword when strangers came knocking and the look in Technoblade’s eyes after his first nightmares. The vision of Tommy cowering away from Phil, terrified by things that Wilbur couldn’t see. His stomach rolled. “I can assure you, Schlatt, that the Angel of Death is not a myth,”

Schlatt sighed dramatically, and Fundy’s warmth against his chest is the only thing that grounds him. “Sally,” Schlatt whines “Tell your stupid fucking husband to stop believing in fairy tails,”

Sally doesn’t pause her work, but her shoulders tensed. “Schlatt shut the fuck up about it. Don’t be an ass,”

Schlatt scowled but slumped back. "Fine, if you two believe in that crap, here are a couple more rumors about the Angel of Death I heard. Apparently, the bastard resurfaced after decades of silence and viciously put down a rebellion, before vanishing again. If those rumors were true- which they aren't- the Hypixel champion Technoblade killed a man, and his apprentice killed at least three, some psycho little kid,"

Schlatt scoffed. "Now, you guys can't believe that shit, can you?"

Distantly, he heard Sally yelling "Schlatt, are you drunk, or just being a fucking asshole,"

Wilbur didn't hear Schlatt's response. The apprentice- had to be Tommy. It had to be Tommy. Tommy, who was following in the bloody footsteps of Techno and Phil. Wilbur had left him. Wilbur had abandoned him and-

"Take Fundy," Wilbur said and Schlatt did it automatically since Wilbur practically shoved Fundy into his arms.

"Wilbur-"

Wilbur ignored Schlatt's protest and headed out the door. He made it approximately ten feet into the woods, before he was on his knees, emptying everything he'd eaten that day onto the forest floor. His hands shook, as his breath came shallowly.

He'd left Tommy. Tommy, who'd left him, but still. He'd left Tommy to become the one thing that Wilbur hoped he'd never be. The thing that had already taken Wilbur's father and brother from him had claimed someone else.

He wondered what happened to Tubbo. He needed to breathe. He needed to *breathe*.

Wilbur wasn't sure how long he sat there, unable to do more than crawl over to lean against a tree, hands shaking before he heard someone come up behind him, and placed a hand on his shoulder.

"Wil?"

It was Sally, thank ender. He was pretty sure he'd fucking deck Schlatt if he saw him. It wasn't his fault but-

Well. Wilbur supposed he did inherit a few violent urges.

"Hey," Wilbur said, getting up, as he turned to face her, hoping that she wouldn't notice that he looked like shit. "Sorry, I just- had to get some air. The potion fumes were messing with my allergies, you know-"

"You've been crying," Sally reached up, cupping his face. "Wilbur-"

"Oh, it's just the allergies, must be the nether wart fumes, you know, making my eyes water-"

"Wilbur," Sally repeated more firmly, frowning "Why are you lying to me?"

Wilbur swallowed hard. He could tell her- he'd never told her who his family was and Sally, wonderful, beautiful Sally, had told him that it didn't matter. She loved him.

That didn't mean Wilbur wanted to admit who they were or that he'd run away from it all.

He had a right to, he did- but had he had a right to leave Tommy like that?

Tubbo?

But then again, what right? What right did Phil have to make him Tommy's parent? To ignore him? To put Technoblade above them again and again and again. What right did Phil have to make Wilbur the easy child- the accessory who liked music and theory and-

No, Wilbur had been trapped there. What happened wasn't his fault. It wasn't. Anger flared up, hot, hotter than it had in months. But...

He didn't want to talk about it. He'd made his choices. Tommy had made his.

He reached up and placed his hand over hers, leaning into it. "I'm fine, really, Sally,"

She frowned but relented "If you say so. But if it really was an allergic reaction, you shouldn't be in there. Take Fundy and go lay down or something,"

"Oh, come on-"

"Nope," Sally said, dropping her hand "You had an allergic reaction, and I don't want to risk Fundy having one. The two of you can go back to the house while I make Schlatt help me bottle things up for tonight,"

Wilbur frowned but didn't argue as he trailed after her. He couldn't argue much without saying something and Sally knew it. Damn her, she was too smart. Perhaps he'd work up the nerve to tell her one day.

"Take your damn baby," Schlatt said, meeting him at the door. Wilbur took Fundy, who had apparently dozed off despite the commotion "He bit me again,"

"I told you to watch your fingers," Sally said lightly, pushing past him. "Not my fault you didn't listen,"

"Yeah, well fuck you, Soot," he grumbled.

"Talking to me or Sally there, man?" Wilbur asked with a half-grin. He was glad Schlatt didn't comment on his obviously dissolved appearance, for once. Though, that might require Schlatt to actually talk about emotions for once.

"I don't fucking know, both of you?" Schlatt snapped.

"Ooh, kinky," Wilbur teased.

"Shut the fuck up, go listen to your wife and rest, or whatever," Schlatt grumbled, making an aborted move to hit Wilbur, as he remembered Wilbur was holding Fundy.

Wilbur laughed, as the tension drained from his shoulders. "Alright, alright man, I get it. Don't have too much fun without you,"

"Oh, I never have fun without you baby," Schlatt leered.

"Stop flirting with my husband and get back to work," Sally shouted from within the cabin.

"Hmm, seems like the world is conspiring to tear us apart," Wilbur said dramatically. "I will see you again."

"Not if he doesn't get his ass back to work!" Sally called "I need help Schlatt and I'll kick your ass if you don't get in here right now,"

Wilbur watched Schlatt go, considerably more relaxed. It didn't matter what the others were doing. Wilbur was safe here. His friends, even if they all weren't here, were enough. His new family- his wife and his son- were more than enough. They could make a life here, they could travel. He didn't need to worry about them.

He just needed to get his fucking head on straight. "We'll be alright, won't we," he cooed down at Fundy, who was blinking at him sleepily. "I'll make sure we are,"

"Are you sure this is best?" Sally asked quietly. Her things were already packed, and Fundy was nestled into her arms. He'd become attached to Wilbur's sweater, so he was wrapped in it instead of the blanket that Schlatt had bought for him a couple of weeks ago.

Despite all his protests, Schlatt spoiled Fundy rotten. He'd gotten him blankets, and toys, and carved him a little wooden figure. It was a small man, flipping the world off, but it was the thought that counted.

"I won't be long. Schlatt and I just need to make a little more money, so that we can go wherever we want. Far away. Safe. But, until then, I need you safe. Hypixel is the safest place I can think for you to go,"

"I'm not defenseless," Sally protested. It was undercut by the bags sitting by the door, and the coat she was wearing.

"I know," Wilbur said, swallowing hard. "But you don't have all your lives, and Fundy *is* defenseless. I'll be fine. Don't worry about me. It'll only be a few weeks,"

Sally had only two lives. A terrible accident, when she was a child, had taken one from her. Wilbur hated seeing one missing- Sally was too bright, too wonderful, to have less life than him. Wilbur knew that she was more than capable of protecting herself- she wasn't a prodigy, but she was competent- probably more so than Wilbur, against living enemies.

Bit Wilbur would be damned if he let harm befall his family. He'd failed once- they'd failed him. He would protect Sally and Fundy with his lives- all three of them.

The server had taken a sharp turn. A new manager for the fighting rings had come in, and Wilbur didn't much care for him. He left them mostly alone, but could be an ass and Schlatt had already gone toe to toe with the man.

That was an enemy made and meant that the protection they'd been afforded as potion sellers had dwindled quickly. Wilbur wasn't exactly defenseless, but he was much better with his words than his PVP. He'd managed to talk two robbers out of robbing them, by talking them in circles.

Sally had slapped the ones he hadn't.

Wilbur had drawn the line when they showed up to his house and tried to break in where Fundy was sleeping. Wilbur was fucking done. He wouldn't stand for that. He would not tolerate Fundy being at the center of danger by greedy, selfish men. His son, who was so small, so bright, would not be put in danger by these bastards.

Unfortunately, they had a contract to fulfill, and couldn't leave unless they paid up, or made the potions. It was only a few more weeks, but the upcharge was absolute bullshit, and Wilbur was pretty sure that they'd get murdered if they tried to leave.

So he was sending Sally and Fundy to Hypixel, where it was safe.

Even if it killed him. Fundy, who was still so small, so young, with bright curious eyes, and a penchant for apples, though Wilbur refused to feed him golden ones now that he was human.

"I know, but I'll miss you. And I'll worry about you," Sally said, frowning at him "And Fundy deserves to have his father around,"

Wilbur's breath caught in his throat. "I am not abandoning our son, Sally," Wilbur said fiercely. Sally flinched and Wilbur took a steadying breath "Don't- don't you ever say that. Just-. I will never, ever abandon him. Or you. Either of you. I have devoted my life to you both, I would never, never abandon you. That is never my intention.,"

Sally twisted out of Wilbur's grip, frowning up at him. "I wasn't accusing you of that, Wilbur," Sally said "There's no need to yell.

Wilbur swallowed hard "I know. I'm... Sorry, Sally. It's just that my father... he wasn't always around. He didn't exactly abandon me but- but I swore, I swore on every life I had than when we had kids, that I would not repeat my father's mistakes,"

Sally's face softened. "Will, you aren't abandoning us. I didn't mean to accuse you of that. I just meant that you need to be careful. We need you,"

"I need you two more," Wilbur said, shaking his head. "I apologize for reacting like that,"

"I forgive you," Sally said "But don't think that we won't continue this conversation. That's the most I've gotten out of you about your family since I've known you,"

Wilbur shook his head "We can talk about it later, maybe. But you need to leave, alright? It'll be getting dark soon, and you still have to walk back to the port- and I can't go with you,"

"I know," Sally said. She didn't move to pick up her bag. "I'm going to miss you, Wilbur,"

"I'm going to miss you more than words can convey, Sally Soot," Wilbur said, offering her his best smile. "But, I need you safe. And it'll only be for a few weeks, then I'll meet you in Hypixel, and we'll be together again. Maybe we can visit Niki after that so that she can meet Fundy- it'll be a hell of a surprise since I forgot to send her letter,"

"You're terrible, Wilbur," Sally said, with a smile. She reached up, and kissed him briefly, before passing fundy to him.

"Oh Fundy," Wilbur said, taking his Son, who stared up at him with wide eyes and a grin full of needle-sharp teeth. "My little champion. Don't give your mother too much trouble, hear? She manages enough of it on her own,"

Fundy let out a small squeal that Wilbur took for affirmation, and handed Fundy back to Sally.

"Be safe," He said again, as she picked up her suitcase "Send Schlatt a message when you get there- I want to know that you're safe,"

"I will," Sally assured him.

He didn't cry until she'd vanished around the bend in the road.

Schlatt found him in his quiet, empty house a few hours later. He didn't say anything for a few minutes, just staring at Wilbur with a frown. Wilbur, who was slumped against the wall, looking out the window didn't acknowledge him either.

"Alright, enough moping," Schlatt snapped. "You didn't let me get drunk this time, so you don't get to be a whiny ass bitch. Get the fuck up and help me make potions,"

Wilbur flipped him off. "I'm not in the mood,"

"Me neither," Schlatt said "You think I'm fucking kidding? Get the fuck up,"

Wilbur glared at him. "No, I don't think I will JSchlatt,"

Wilbur thought that perhaps he'd won. the fight- that was until Schlatt grabbed him roughly by the shoulders and hauled him to his feet. "What the fuck-"

"I told you I didn't have time for this shit," Schlatt snapped. "Now, come on. Moping won't get you out of here any faster,"

"I hate you,"

"Yeah, yeah, sure you do jackass," Schlatt muttered. "C'mon. Sitting here won't do jackshit. We gotta work tonight dude."

Schlatt was right, unfortunately, so he shoved off of him standing up. “Fine,’ he grumbled “I’m coming, I’m coming.”

Later that night, during the rush of potions sales, Schlatt tapped Wilbur’s shoulder. “Sally messaged me. She and the little brat made it there safely and have an inn for the night.”

Wilbur hardly had time to sag in relief before he had to go back to work, some asshole shouting about a strength potion at the counter. . He’d have Schlatt pass along his message for him later.

Chapter End Notes

1) I hope you guys like this! This will be the last Wilbur interlude, from now on any wilbur POV will be included like a normal POV in chapters! The plots are converging.

2) I'm projecting on Wilbur so he gets the coping mechanism that I say he gets, and I don't wanna hear about it /hj

3) Fundy's aging will be explained more later. I also refuse to write pregnancy, so you get handwavey magic baby fundy lol. It's just a personal ick, so we got this.

4) Schlatt, in this particular world, is no necessarily a bad person at this point, though the start of his problems with alcohol are showing. There probably won't be much more of him tbh, but probably a few scenes.

5) that's it! be kind to each other, love yourself, have a good day!

my thoughts are closing in

Chapter Summary

Philza angst. Tommy has a Time

Chapter Notes

Please note the end of last chapter does not line up time-line wise with the start of this chapter. It ends about 2-3 weeks before this chapter starts.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Phil had retreated back to his and Techno's house by the time Technoblade had come home. Tubbo was alright- Tommy and Ranboo were with him and Phil had managed to give him a hug, and a few words of comfort, though Phil knew there was no comfort. To know that your hands were bloody with the life of someone you loved. Tubbo's grief couldn't quite capture what it was like knowing you murdered your own child without hesitation, but Tubbo was also a child.

Tubbo was also a child who had found out it was his fault, his best friend, his other half. He was allowed to be upset. But, Phil couldn't take that hurt away, and Tubbo wasn't ready to talk. Tommy and Ranboo could probably do more good than Phil could. Apparently Phil wasn't good at being a father to anyone.

But, he would keep trying to be better. He would be better. And part of that was talking to Technoblade.

Techno had probably gone sparring. He'd been wound dangerously tight- that's why Phil had let him go off to fight. Better than letting him snap at the boys. Techno and Chat rarely, rarely turned against Phil- hadn't in years and while Techno had confessed that Chat was suddenly very fond of Tommy, it was best. Chat was unpredictable, and while usually nothing more than an annoyance or perhaps a help, but occasionally they grew too much, feeding off emotions, when Technoblade allowed them.

"What's wrong?" Technoblade asked, before he was even fully through the door. His red eyes scanned over the room, then Phil as if to check him for injuries. "Whose hurt? Is there?"

"Woah mate," Phil said, getting to her feet. He held his hands up, hoping to appear disarming. "Calm down, we're all safe and sound, no need to freak out."

Technoblade blinked a few times and Phil's stomach twisted with guilt at the look of slight panic in Techno's face. A moment later, Technoblade's shoulders relaxed slightly. "Phil, you can't send a guy a message like that- I thought Tommy'd jumped out a window or Tubbo had run off or something."

"Sorry mate," Phil said apologetically "I didn't mean to freak you outm I didn't think about the wording."

"It's fine," Technoblade said gruffly, as he deposited his cloak by the door, and hung his mask on the rack. He is obviously sweaty from sparring, and probably his run home. Phil was salmsot ceritna that he'd run, or nearly run all the way home. "I just figured someone had done somethin' stupid. They always let their emotions get the best of them."

"They're kids." Phil said gently, but the words tasted a little like ash on his lips. He'd never been good at treating his children like children. "Hell, they're people Techno."

Techno snorted "Yeah, well, whatever. What did you need?"

Phil shrugged "I just... needed to talk to you mate. Are you ok? You've been weird since that night Ranboo found out about the time travel and shit. Hell, you've been weird since Ranboo showed up."

Phil frowned "Is Ranboo the problem mate?"

Technoblade looked startled. "Ranboo-? No, what, this doesn't have anythin' to do with Ranboo. And I don't know what you're talking about Phil. I haven't been acting weird- you're being weird."

Phil snorted "alright mate, I know you've been spending too much time with Tommy,"

Technoblade grimaced "yeah, let's pretend I didn't say that one. But Phil, really, I'm fine. I don't know what you're talkin' about."

"Techno, this is literally the first time I've talked to you alone in like three weeks. Something is up mate, I know you better than this." Phil prodded. Techno shifted slightly, breaking eye contact to look at a point just off to Phil's left.

For a second, Phil thought Technoblade wans't going to tell him which-

That was concerning. Techno usually told Phil everything and Phil, for better or worse, rarely hid things from Technoblade. Phil knew that Techno had secrets, and his own life, but Phil was usually in on the important things. Techno not telling him what was bothering him made Phil nervous.

But, then Techno relented, letting out a huff that might have been a sigh if it wasn't so aggressive. "Tommy... Tommy and I had a conversation."

"Alright, that's not too unusual mate. Was something about this conversation different?" Phil prodded gently.

“Tommy called me his bother the night that he brought Ranboo home.” Technoblade said “We had a conversation about that,”

Phil... hadn't been expecting that. For a variety of reasons. “Oh?” He managed, clamping down on his instinct to demand more information from Technoblade.

“Yeah, I could see that he freaked out a little- apparently he thought that was gonna push some sort of boundary- insultin' me and stealin' my stuff was fine, but not that I guess.” Technoblade frowned. “He was scared I was gonna kick him out or something, which is ridiculous, and I guess I wasn't handlin' things the best because I might've yelled a little, but really, if I was gonna kick him out I woulda done that a long time ago.”

Phil still wasn't sure what the point of all this was, but it was better ot let Techno ramble around the point, than push and shut him down. He didn't think Technoblade wouldn't tell him, but Phil wasn't sure. Tommy had a way of making Techno act oddly. It wasn't necessarily bad, Phil just wasn't quite used to the new dynamic.

“Anyway, basically, I thought that he was just worried I'd be upset when he took it back, cause he was just joking, but, apparently, he wasn't joking about it and was worried I'd be mad about it. I wasn't really somethin' I was prepared for. I've never been very good at caring about other people- besides you, Phil- and I hadn't really considered it but...” Technoblade trailed off, but Phil didn't really need to hear the rest of that sentence.

“You care about him Tech,” Phil said gently. Technoblade didn't really like talking about his own feelings or really dealing with them in any way at all, unless it was anger. “You have for some time now.”

“I have, haven't I?” There was something almost bitter on Technoblade's face “ I do care about him, even though I didn't want to. I told him that I cared about him. I couldn't lie to him- especially not when it would make things worse.”

Technoblade scoffed “I know what I am Phil. I'm just a replacement until we find Wilbur. He's really Tommy's brother. What am I? I walked away when he was a kid, and well, I've always been... less than great at being a brother. At being a son. I wasn't meant to be part of a family, but I... I didn't know what to say to him, Phil. I know I'm a stand in and that's.. It's fine, because Wilbur is the better one, but... I knew you'd read too much into it.”

And just like that Technoblade's tone, which had dripped a bitterness and hurt that made Phil's heart wrench was gone, replaced by something more dry and deadpan. “I didn't want you gettin' any ideas in your head, old man. Tommy's just emotional and unstable and I'm turning into a sap. Anyway, I'm going to go eat- all the turmoil earlier I didn't grab anything.”

Technoblade duck dinto the kitchen and came out with a leftover baked potato and apple. He sat down on the couch. “Oh, let me tell you about the guy that I met at the training arena Phil. You wouldn't believe him.”

Phil sat there for the next few minutes, letting Techno chat about the guy he sparred with- some up and comer he'd met at the training arena, who was apparently good, but not as good

as his ego made him think. “He says he’s going to make it in the championship tournament, and I agree, but I don’t think he’ll beat me. Might not even make it to the top fight. He’s more arena trained than anything, but has good adaptability skills.”

“Don’t get too cocky mate.” Phil said gently. He wasn’t sure how he managed to keep his voice even and normal “You don’t want to lose cause you underestimated him.”

Technoschooled as he polished off the apple. “Nah, don’t worry Phil. I’m just gonna kick my training up. Maybe Tommy or Tubbo will join me. Or you, or heck, even Ranboo, but I don;t think the kid would be much of a challenge for me. Anyway, I’m headin’ to bed. Try and actually sleep tonight, old man”

Before Phil could say anything, Technoblade was halfway out of the room and Phil wasn’t sure there was much point in chasing after him. He could of course, and maybe get more information out of him, but it wouldn’t be easy, nor would it really be worth it, not when Phil had to figure out what the fuck to even say to that. While one part of him was elated that Technoblade had admitted, to himself, Tommy, and Phil, he was also devastated by the admission that Technoblade didn’t view himself as family because he didn’t feel worthy.

Technoblade hadn’t called Phil dad in years, and Phil had always assumed, well, he’d assumed it was because Technoblade resented him. Phil hadn’t been able to save Techno from his voices. He hadn’t been able to protect him in the ways that Phil wanted to.

Apparently, Phil had fucked up even more than he thought. Technoblade thought that-

“Fuck,” Phil muttered, burying his head in his hands.

The thing was, Phil didn’t know how to fix it.

He’d been thinking that he could, that he’d get everything under control, and that it would all be fine.

Everything was not fucking fine. Ever single one of his kids was fucked up, at least a little and Phil hadn’t realized it. Maybe not all of it was his fault, sure, but he should’ve been there for his kids. He wasn’t. Or, at least he hadn’t been enough. He’d done what he thought was best. He’d tried for all of them but... fuck. He thought he’d done so well.

But that was changing, immediately. He had thought Techno was fine. Techno was the kid he hadn’t needed to worry about currently (at least not the most) because he’d spent years worrying over Techno. He thought that they were past that.

He thought that they were fine. Sure, Techno hadn’t wanted to call him dad, but Phil had lived with that, could live with that, considering they were still close. Technoblade was his son, but also one of Phil’s best friends. He had other friends and didn’t quite give Techno the same treatment, but-

Techno was still his son, even if Phil had stopped calling him that. But he’d thought-

That didn't matter. What he thought didn't matter because obviously, he was wrong. And he needed to be there for Technoblade more than he had been lately.

He also needed to be there for Tommy and Tubbo, because the revelation that Tubbo had killed Tommy, even accidentally, had shaken them. He also needed to be there for Ranboo, because the poor kid was a bundle of nerves disguised as a teenager who had absolutely no support and Phil wasn't about to let the little fucker fall apart under his roof. Not on his watch.

Unfortunately, Phil was only one man and couldn't be everywhere all of the time.

That included matches, which half the time still conflicted. But, Phil wanted to show Techno that he still supported him, that he wasn't giving up on Techno because Tommy and Wilbur were his real sons, or any bullshit like that.

However, he didn't want Tommy to think that he was giving him up in favor of Techno again.

So he struck a deal with Ranboo.

And okay, wait, now listen. Maybe it was a new low, using Ranboo as a stand in, but he was desperate and the kid honestly needed to get out more. It also wouldn't hurt for him to spend a little more time with Techno- poor kid honestly seemed terrified of him sometimes.

So he sent Ranboo to watch whoever he wasn't watching that day. There was always an excuse, but he was pretty sure Ranboo saw through it. Phil just wanted to make sure no one was alone, ok?

It only happened a couple times anyway- the championship tournament was drawing near, so the matches were getting less frequent, unless they just wanted to play. But until he could corner Techno away from the others for an actual conversation, it was the best he could do.

He wasn't sure that his best was very good these days.

But, he was trying.

Things with the book hadn't progressed much, after Tommy's death had been revealed and no one seemed to want to get back at it. It had only been a few days, to be fair, but it still had hardly been mentioned. Phil couldn't blame them. Tubbo had taken the news terribly. Perhaps worse than Phil had even anticipated.

Phil had found him on the roof one night, where Phil had made a habit of checking, just in case Tommy and Techno were brooding up there in the middle of the night(though, Phil couldn't say much. It was a nice fucking spot to sit, okay?). He hadn't expected to see Tubbo.

Tubbo hadn't exactly been forthcoming, since Phil was pretty sure he had interrupted him crying- not that Tubbo would fucking admit it- but Phil had managed to get a bit out of him.

“I just- what kind of fucker does that?” Tubbo asked, staring resolutely away from Phil
“What sort of friend was I that-that I let that happen? That Tommy wasn't standing by my side?”

“It doesn't matter,” Phil said, settling beside Tubbo. His heart ached. Part of him- part of him wanted to be angry at Tubbo, maybe. Angry that Tubbo and Tommy hadn't protected each other. Phil never really thought about his kids dying- not before he did anyway. But somehow, it had never occurred to him that Tommy and Tubbo wouldn't be together then.

But even if he was angry at Tubbo, it wasn't this Tubbo. Not the one sitting on the roof in the middle of the night, so that he didn't disturb anyone with his crying. Phil had wrapped an arm and a wing around Tubbo, who stiffened slightly before relaxing. “You aren't that version of you. Tubbo, Tommy said it was an accident. Karl said it was an accident. He doesn't blame you- even if you did it. No one blames you but you,”

“Yeah, well, then I'm the only one that's right,” Tubbo snapped.

Phil didn't know what to say. He never knew what to say. “Tubbo, you're brilliant, but you're fucking wrong, mate,”

Tubbo didn't argue, but Phil recognized the set of his jaw as he still stared away. When Tubbo finally left him, pushing Phil's wing off, Phil had been cold, even though the summer air was warm.

Tommy hadn't sewn much, as far as Phil could tell, but he hadn't pushed to ask. It had been an eventful few weeks. He knew materials couldn't make up for everything, but it was easy. If Tommy or Tubbo or Techno, or hell, even Ranboo, if they wanted something, Phil did his best to get it for them.

Maybe he'd gone overboard when Ranboo had mentioned that he liked milk, and perhaps overstocked with more milk than anyone could ever hope to drink, but hey, he wanted him to be comfortable. Kid didn't have any fucking family.

Tommy had let Techno keep cutting and braiding his hair as needed. It wasn't long enough to really braid, but Phil had caught the one that Tommy kept behind his ear. It made his heart swell. Tubbo's hair was getting long. Phil wondered if Tubbo would let one of them braid a piece. Maybe one of these days Ranboo would get one too.

Tommy was ready to fucking leave.

That sounded very rude, but it was true and Tommy didn't give a shit. If Tommy was looking for another middle name he'd pick rude. Fuck what everyone thought. Techno's fight was over, the crowds were still teaming, and Tommy was fucking antsy. He knew Dream was on the server- he'd managed to avoid him so far, but he couldn't escape the fact. Tommy had managed to tamp his feeling about it down- it was easier to focus on Bedwars and keeping Tubbo from going all self-guilt destruct on him.

But Dream was there. And, better yet, he was the crowd favorite to go up against Technoblade- obviously, Technoblade was superior in every conceivable way- so Tommy had learned to live with the mention of him.

And it wasn't like he hadn't lived with it before, obviously, he didn't freak out every time Dream's name was mentioned. He just- Tommy hadn't exactly been prepared for the implication of maybe seeing Dream again, free and clear, after so, so long.

But, whatever, Tommy didn't really like the crowd, people had been talking about Dream all day, and he needed a fucking break. People talking about him made it a little hard to ignore, okay? Tommy wasn't a fucking pussy and if he saw Dream he'd beat the shit out of him, but Tommy didn't want to embarrass Dream like that in front of a crowd.

That was it. Fuck off.

Tommy was also tired and really didn't want to have to do that. Turns out that reading about your unfortunate past and the trauma that your best friends went through because of your own stupid fucking actions, wasn't exactly conducive to good sleep. Especially not when Tubbo was having nightmares on top of Tommy's nightmares. Poor Ranboo had to be getting no fucking sleep, even though Tommy was pretty sure he was keeping his own screaming to a minimum.

And Tommy had slept almost none the night before. He'd had his own nightmares, mostly about Dream and L'manburg and exile, nothing new, and woken up in a cold sweat, with trembling hands.

Just as he'd drifted back off, Tubbo woke up screaming and Tommy had to basically force Tubbo to talk about it. He still wouldn't admit exactly what he dreamt about, but Tommy spent a good portion of the night just trying to distract Tubbo, or called him a fucking idiot for being so guilty.

Whatever, that just meant that after watching the matches, Tommy was exhausted. He was being prickly and he knew it, snapping at strangers who just happened to be there and he'd already yelled at Ranboo. He felt a little bad about it, but Ranboo was a bitch so, whatever.

He didn't want to stay in the stands or hover outside the gate where Ranboo usually waited, because there were usually even more hecklers there than inside the champion area and if Tommy got heckled he'd start stabbing shit. Literally. It wouldn't do much, but his hands itched for the familiar weight of his sword.

Ranboo, unfortunately, didn't have a pass for the PVP champion area yet- Techno was trying to get him one, but apparently, there was red tape and Technoblade was getting close to stabbing a minimum wage worker. Or just cutting through the red tape. Literally. With a sword. That meant that Ranboo was usually left standing out the gate to get in, waiting for them to come pick him up. He always looked so sad and lonely, like a kicked puppy, but Tommy was a bit of a bitch and didn't want to fight those crowds. Besides, Ranboo had found a nice alcove to hide in and didn't get bothered too much.

So he just leaned on Tubbo, pretending to be more tired than he was, as Tubbo whined, but allowed him to practically lay over his shoulder. “You’re too fucking heavy,” Tubbo complained

“Are you calling me fat Tubbo?” Tommy cried, leaning even more heavily on Tubbo, who stumbled “Are you fat-shaming me Tubbo? I can’t believe it. Phil, Tubbo is fat-shaming me!”

Phil laughed “Tubbo, how could you? What if we started shaming you because you’re short?”

Tubbo’s jaw dropped “You literally do! What the fuck?”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Tommy said resolutely. “You’re a fucking liar Tubbo Underscore.”

Tommy found himself on the ground the next moment, glaring up at Tubbo, who was smirking. “What was that?” Tubbo asked sweetly, peering down at him.

“Fuck you Tubbo,” Tommy grumbled, scrambling to his feet. “Bitch. Bastard,”

“Come on boys,” Phil called, putting himself between them “Let’s go get Techno. He’ll want to be rescued since this qualified him for the championship. All the damn reporters for the TWT trying to get a picture. And Ranboo is waiting for us.”

“I suppose it’s not every day you get to rescue Technoblade himself.” Tubbo mused “I guess can put off Tommy’s murder for later.”

His eyes widened a split second later as he realized what he said. Phil looked a little pale too as he turned to face Tommy. Tommy just forced himself to laugh. He wasn’t particularly bothered by it- Really! He wasn’t! He was over the whole dying shit anyway, but Tubbo looked fucked up about it and while, okay, maybe Tommy wasn’t ok with his death, he didn’t exactly want to make Tubbo feel bad about it. It wasn’t Tubbo’s fault.

Fucking Tubbo. Tommy told him that it wasn’t his fault, but did Tubbo ever listen? No. Tubbo just refused to talk about, it too. Fucker.

Phil’s shoulders relaxed though, as Tommy laughed and Tubbo looked slightly less worried. “I’m not fucking glass guys.” Tommy snapped “I’m not fragile, I’m a big man. I can take a joke.”

“Hmm, alright then.” Tubbo said, smiling a little too nicely “You’re the lamest one here- the only human after all,”

Tommy gasped “You’ve changed Tubbo. You started growing horns- you can’t even fucking see them- and it changed you. You chew on the bedsheets-”

“I do not! Liar!” Tubbo interjected. “How would you even know, we don’t share a bed anyway-”

“And you’re humanphobic!” Tommy continued, ignoring Tubbo’s interruption. “Fucking- Phil can you believe it? My best friend turning against me like this,”

“Oh no, we are not getting back into the humanphobic shit, “ Phil said, barely holding back a laugh. “Techno boys. We’re going to get Techno.”

A few minutes later they retrieved Technoblade from the crowds, who looked angry, but more in the ‘I’m irritated as fuck’ way, rather than the actual murder way. Tommy had gotten pretty fucking good at distinguishing the two.

Techno and Phil were chatting about something while Tubbo tried to fire up the hybrid argument again. If Tommy wasn’t quite so tired he might’ve risen to the bait, but he was now leaning against Phil a little more than was strictly necessary because he really was tired. He could definitely function without sleep, but Phil had fucked up his sleep schedule by actually making him sleep every night, so it was his responsibility to carry the weight of that choice. Literally.

Honestly, it was fucking annoying that his body actually expected him to get rest. He had been fine functioning at three to four hours a night every couple of days. Wilbur had been sleeping even less in Pogtopia and L’Manburg!

Though... to be fair, that probably wasn’t exactly a good benchmark. Fuck.

Whatever. He was blaming Phil for this- or maybe Technoblade. Both of them. Both of them were bitches and deserved to be told so.

Before he could tell Technoblade and Phil about the ultimate fuck up they’d caused- how they’d totally ruined him, Ranboo met them at the gates, looking terribly nervous. More nervous than usual and honestly that was a pretty high benchmark.

“Hey guys, I’m sorry, but I don’t know what to do and I know that you guys don’t even really need me here and I’m not like, part of whatever weird family thing you guys have going on, but I really, really need help and-”

“Ranboo,” Technoblade cut in, hand drifting toward his inventory “What’s wrong?” Tommy righted himself, as Tubbo sidled up to Ranboo, scanning the crowd discreetly for any danger. Or, not so discreetly, with the way he was glaring.

Ranboo looked startled as if he hadn’t expected any of them to say anything at all. “Uh- I- this lady- we’re not really friends but she works the gates, y’know and we talk sometimes since she started a few weeks ago, she’s really nice and-”

“Ranboo, get to the point mate,” Phil cut in.

“Oh- uh, sorry! She collapsed and she’s sick and I don’t know what’s wrong. She has a kid at home and someone gave her a healing potion but it didn’t help-” Ranboo rambled nervously, wringing his hands. “I-I don’t know what to do. She said she doesn’t want any help but she can’t even really stand up and I don’t want her to get hurt and, uh, yeah I didn’t know what else to do,”

The kid sold Phil. Tommy watched his face change from somewhat apathetic to sympathetic in an instant. "Alright mate, lead the way."

Technoblade sighed but removed his hand from his sword. Technoblade fell in step behind Phil and Ranboo, who were cutting through the crowd with Tubbo, and Tommy fell in beside him. "Phil's got a bleedin' heart," Technoblade grumbled but didn't protest. If Phil wanted to help someone Technoblade wouldn't argue too much. Pussy.

By the time Techno and Tommy caught up with Phil and Ranboo, Phil was already kneeling beside a redheaded woman who was half sitting, half lying in a small alcove, off the main area.

"I'm fine- really- I just need a minute," She was saying, despite looking, in Tommy's opinion, like shit.

"Stop here," Technoblade said quietly, just out of her line of sight. "Don't wanna overwhelm her,"

Tommy was pretty sure that he didn't give a shit about overwhelming her- he probably just want to deal with people. Tommy couldn't much blame him. He was fucking tired too.

"You're very much not fine," Phil said. He was kneeling beside her, his green cloak pooling around his feet "How many healing potions have you had today?"

Ranboo was hovering nervously over them, stooping almost comically to minimize his height and Tubbo was standing beside him.

"I don't know- three?"

"Someone gave her at least two when she collapsed," Ranboo added. "She shoed them off though,"

"I managed to get rid of everyone but Ranboo," She said, with a half-grin. "This kid worries too much- I guess I see where he gets it,"

"Ranboo was right to worry," Phil said firmly, frowning at her "You've absolutely overdosed on healing potion. You're burning up. Your body is so fucking overloaded with magic and I can literally feel it crackling under your skin, holy shit. Mate, you are in serious, serious danger,"

She frowned., pulling her wrist away from where Phil had been grasping it- probably checking her pulse or some shit. Tommy didn't know how to treat magical poisoning. Wilbur had always made sure none of them ever had too much. Dream hadn't let him get that kind of shit, and Technoblade kept his potions locked up right after Tommy moved in. Phil seemed to know what he was doing. Phil almost always did, though. "Well, I appreciate your concern, but I'm fine. Really. Ranboo, I appreciate your worry, you're a good kid, but I can take care of myself."

Phil's frown deepened "I don't think you understand the severity of what's going on. Your body is fucking burning up with magic. This isn't a 'sleep it off' type deal. You could die, mate. You need treatment, or at least someone watching over you. I can't in good conscience let you go off on your own unless you're going to be taken care of."

The woman paled. Something about her seemed vaguely familiar, though Tommy couldn't place it. Something about the way she moved, glancing around, Fuck why couldn't he figure it out. "I- I have to get back to my son. He's just a baby, and I left him with our neighbor, but she leaves for her shift after I get home. Just, just tell me what to do for my treatment. I can take care of myself."

Phil looked uneasy "Mate, this isn't a take care of it yourself problem--"

"I'm not trying to be rude, but I don't know you and I really, really just need to get home. My son is at home and I can't leave him. I need to get home."

"Sally," Ranboo said, and Tommy started "Please, let Phil help you, you've been sick for days now--"

"I need to get back to Fundy," Sally insisted, attempting to get to her feet, as she brushed off Phil's hand.

For a split second everything just stopped the noise of the Hypixel crowd, the sound of Phil's voice, Techno's hand on his shoulder, the smell of sweat and magic, even his vision it all vanished. This was Sally. This was Sally. Wilbur's Sally. Fundy's mom. Tommy felt like someone had stolen the air from his lungs as his brain tried to process what the fuck was happening.

He wrenched his shoulder out of Technoblade's grip pushing past Ranboo and Tubbo, into the alcove, eyes wide. He wasn't sure what he was going to say, but he needed to- he needed to make sure she didn't fucking die. Tommy didn't know if this is how she died last time, but Tommy had already fucked so many things up for Wilbur. He'd caused nothing but problems that someone else had to clean up- usually Wilbur. Even this time around he hadn't done anything but cause more issues than he was worth.

He would fix this one thing. He'd fix this one fucking thing for Wilbur if it killed him.

"Magical poisoning is no fucking joke," Tommy said, "What, do you want your son to find your fucking dead body?"

"Tommy!" Phil exclaimed, aghast. Tommy didn't care if he was being harsh, or a dick, he just needed to make sure Sally didn't die. He could see it on Phil's face anyway. He was putting the pieces together. He knew, he knew who Sally was, or at least who Fundy was. Phil was smart. Technoblade would put the pieces together too if he hadn't already. Tommy didn't care. He was fixing this fucking mess.

Sally's lips pressed shut and she reeled back slightly as if Tommy's hit her. Good. He hoped it fucking hurt. It was supposed to. He wanted Sally to like him- he wanted her to lead him

back to Wilbur, to bring Wilbur home, fuck Tommy desperately wanted to beg her to bring Wilbur here, but if she was dead, if Tommy let her die, then Wilbur would never forgive him.

Fuck, Tommy wouldn't forgive himself.

"Ranbitch here is worried about you, so let us fucking help you, unless you want Fundy to grow up without a mother." Tommy wanted to scream. Fundy had already grown up without a mother. Wilbur had raised him and raised him well, but- but Wilbur had never moved on. Whatever had happened, Wilbur never recovered.

Fundy deserved a mother. Wilbur deserved to be happy.

Sally seemed like she was going to protest, but her shoulders slumped. "I can't pay you," She said lowly. She was ashamed, Tommy realized. "I-I can't."

"No payment needed mate," Phil said, glancing over to meet Tommy's eyes briefly. He definitely knew who she was, then, or at least had a guess. He'd at least recognized Fundy's name as familiar if he didn't know who it was.

"Swear it," She insisted. "I want to hear you say it. I want witnesses. I don't want you to go back on that later,"

"Of course," Phil said and offered her a hand. She took it and shook it firmly. "I'm just trying to be helpful. And any friend of Ranboo's is a friend of ours."

She opened her mouth, but before she could reply, probably some protest or disbelief. Her eyes rolled back into her head and she collapsed. Phil lunged, managing to catch her before she slammed against the concrete, but only just.

"Shit," Phil said, adjusting her so that she was leaning more against his shoulder. "This is worse than I thought. Ranboo, mate, get her other shoulder."

"Oh- yeah! Sure! I can do that!" Ranboo said, going to support Sally's other side.

The crowd thronged around them, concerned onlookers and nosy assholes peering over but Technoblade only had to scowl before they backed off. Fucking cowards. It was useful of course because they weren't doing anything wrong, but honestly. It looked like she was getting kidnapped and no one would even try to help her. What the fuck?

Technoblade cut through the path as Ranboo and Phil maneuvered her carefully. Tommy and Tubbo walked behind them. Tommy hadn't drawn his sword, but never let his hand move far. Fuck the crowds. He scowled at the people who whispered to his left. They didn't cower from him like they did Techno, but they at least looked away.

Tommy fought the urge to shout. It wouldn't be helpful. He needed to be helpful. This was for Wilbur. For Fundy.

Tommy just hoped Wilbur wouldn't be too mad at their intrusion on his life.

Tommy hoped that Wilbur would come home.

Chapter End Notes

1)uhhh, hey it's Sally! I hope this doesn't feel rushed? The timeline is kinda weird and I'm not happy with this chapter, but I felt the plot stalling again so we're moving along. Sorry! Also sorry this chapter is on the shorter side, I had another like 4k written but it still wasn't done so I cut it here. i'm very tired so idc about typos. I did my best.

2) gonna be real with you guys i'm fighting the urge to be the stereotypical fanfic writer and explain what the fuck is going on in my life rn bc its crazy, but i do not want you guys to have that much info about me lmao. it would be funny tho. just know that. (I don't want pity comments I just want to do the Thing that fanfic authors do)

3) I love all your comments! they are genuinely so nice and make my day. However I Cannot respond to all of them. I would love to. I would love, love, love to. I can't. Please know that I read every single one of them and I love each and every one of you and will try, one day, to respond, but I always get such overwhelming support it... well it overwhelms me lol. But I see you all and appreciate you all. know that please

4) Take care of each other. Really. Please just remember that everyone is human. Be kind. Be supportive. drink water, rest, and know that people care about you. get some sleep everyone and take a break from the internet. finish this chatper and go talk a walk. do a craft. something else for a minute. <3

the problem's in my chest

Chapter Summary

technoblade has a chat (haha), Tommy lies, and it's one of the moments ya'll have been waiting for

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

She wasn't dead.

Yet anyway.

That was what Technoblade kept telling himself.

Tommy had filled him in, between an itanty of swears and nervous tangents, that this woman was Wilbur's wife. Technoblade had vaguely remembered that Phil had mentioned Wilbur having a son, months ago, long before they ever left the server. Techno had assumed that was a... more future tense event that it was, apparently.

Tommy seemed nervous about it, flittering in and out of the room where they'd laid her. They hadn't known where she lived when she passed out, so they'd just taken her home. Since then, Ranboo had managed to find out from one of the other gate workers, the approximate neighborhood where she lived. It was pretty far out of the way, so it was probably best that she was there.

Unless, you know, she thought that they kidnapped her. Technoblade knew he could be a little... intimidating. It was part of his carefully crafted reputation after all- being a bloodthirsty weapon of mass destruction was helpful when fighting for your life or on a sparring mat.

Not so much when you're left alone with a teenager and a woman who doesn't know you.

That's why he'd hung back- he and Tommy were a little overwhelming - and Pil was helpin'. Techno didn't need to get in the middle of that.

But, once Ranboo figured out where Sally lived, and therefore where her whole baby, *Wilbur's son*, was. Phil had left Technoblade in charge, and taken Tommy and Ranboo with him to fetch said baby.

Technoblade wasn't going to protest not having to go get a baby.

The only thing that he was worse at that bedside manner was his ability to deal with kids.

Ugh.

Tubbo was still in the house, at least, so he wasn't alone. But, Tubbo had no real experience dealing with magic sickness. Technoblade had- not as much as Phil- but Phil had trained him on exactly how to deal with magical sickness.

The first thing was the cause of the sickness. Obviously, she'd overdosed on healing pots. She was a hybrid, which was likely the only reason she hadn't burned up from the inside out yet, but she had blown way past her tolerance. There wasn't much to be done with that, it's not like they could make her undrink the potion. Milk helped, but only if she was awake enough to drink it and not choke. Besides, while it might help, Milk itself couldn't cure a magical overdose by any stretch.

Once Phil had put her in the house, though, Technoblade had noticed her ring. It wasn't anything fancy, but there, in the center, was a large chunk of lapis.

Lapis in small amounts wasn't usually harmful- the amount of magic that it exuded wasn't enough to hurt people, even if it was in casual jewelry like necklaces and bracelets. But, if she'd been wearing that ring with Lapis pressed directly against her skin, on top of her magic poisoning, it was dangerous. She didn't need any more residual magic. So he'd had to take it off. He felt a little bad, because it was her wedding ring, probably, and one Wilbur had made for her.

It looked like something Wilbur would make- he hadn't even bothered to buy his wife a ring, or smith a nice one. Typical.

He hadn't gotten rid of it, but he'd set it across the room. She didn't need any extra magic in her system.

Now, he was watching her sleep. There wasn't any way to fix this with potions- even an awkward potion could make things worse. No, Technoblade had given her a cocktail of herbs and tea that would help regulate her body temperature while she rode out the magic poisoning. There were more drastic measures that they could take, but Technoblade hoped that they didn't have to go there.

He wondered where the hell Wilbur was though. For all his talk about how Phil and Techno had abandoned him, he wasn't anywhere around, apparently. He was a hypocrite and Technoblade wasn't surprised. Wilbur's bark had always been bigger than his bite.

Unfortunately, that meant Technoblade was left with her. It was awkward, even though she was unconscious. He didn't even know her, nor did he really care about her, and his Chat was being entirely unhelpful since about half of them wanted to murder her as revenge on Wilbur while the other half seemed to like her.

So, Techno was just ignoring them and trying to make sure that Sally wasn't getting worse in her sleep, and kept exchanging cool cloths on her forehead.

She should've stayed asleep the whole time Phil was gone- the sheer amount of magic, it was lucky she hadn't lost a life already. But as Technoblade switched out an uncomfortably warm

cloth for a cool one her eyes snapped open.

“Where am I?” SHe asked, attempting to sit up “what’s going on?”

“Woah,” Technoblade said, taking a step back, more out of surprise than anything “You kinda blacked out. Phil brought you here, so that way we weren’t standin’ in the middle of the street while he tried to prevent you from, you know, dyin’,”

She shook her head, scanning the room frantically, as if looking for something “I need to go, I need to need to get back to Fundy, I can’t stay here-”

“You need to stay in bed,” Technoblade said. SHe was sTubborn- he was understanding why Wilbur would like her “Phil and Ranboo and Tommy are goin’ to get Fundy. He’ll be here soon.”

“How-” She coughed, cutting herself off. Technoblade could see her whole body shaking from the exertion of simply sitting up. He resisted the urge to roll his eyes. What was she even tryin’ to prove? “How did you know where to find him?”

“Your boss told us where you lived.” Technoblade said “Ranboo and Tommy are very convincin’ when they want to be. Just go back to sleep.”

She was fighting sleep- that much was obvious. Her body was exhausted, trying to keep her alive, but she was fighting rest hard. She was nervous, but her eyes were steely, behind the fever haze. It was almost impressive, the sheer amount of willpower she was exhibiting. Technoblade had seen hardened soldiers give in to lesser illnesses faster than this. “I’m not doing anything until I see my son. And until I have proof that I’m not being held hostage here.”

E

E

E

Are we going to kill her now?

Murder pog?

Blood!

Blood for the Blood God!

E

E

No, guys, no murder!

Sally has to live!

No death!

E

“Why would we be holdin’ you hostage!” Technoblade exclaimed, throwing his hands up “What could we have to gain from that? You’re welcome to walk out, but I don’t think you’d make it to the door.”

“You’re Technoblade, aren’t you?” she bit out angrily. Her voice was shaking, but Technoblade honestly wasn’t sure if she was scared or angry. Or maybe just tired. “I’ve heard the stories about what you do outside of Hypixel. You seem like the type to kidnap people for fun.”

She was smart, he had to give her that. Technoblade wasn’t wearing his mask, crown, or cloak. His hair was still pulled into a braid, but he was wearing more casual clothes and more earrings than he normally did while fighting. Most people didn’t know what his face looked like, really. He was surprised she’d figured him out since she hadn’t seemed to notice him earlier and Ranboo swore he hadn’t mentioned Techno. He shouldn’t have been surprised. Wilbur would go for a smart one.

Apparently, he waited too long to respond because she kept going “I don’t-I don’t know if this is related to my husband- I know he’s had run-ins with you. And the angel of Death. Is that Phil? Is he...? It doesn’t matter. If this is about Wilbur, I won’t... What do you even want with us? With him?”

Technoblade huffed, almost laughing. Sally was fierce. She was smart. She was stubborn. Of *course* this is who Wilbur married.

“Of course Wilbur was dramatic about it,” Technoblade grumbled because of course Wilbur hadn’t effectively explained how he knew them. That would make things too easy. No, he had to keep pouting like he was a little kid and keep up the temper tantrum. “We’re not kidnappin’ you, ender. Wilbur- what did Wilbur even tell you about us?”

Sally looked a little shaken by his reaction- or maybe she was just sick. “He said... He said that he knew that the Angel of Death trained you and that you were bloodthirsty monsters basically. Wilbur didn’t tell me this, but I also heard rumors about you having an apprentice. Wilbur seemed to believe it, and was upset by it- I didn’t realize that you had three. I’d have never guessed that Ranboo....”

Technoblade couldn’t help but laugh, even if it was a little bit and probably did nothing to soothe her nerves. “Apprentices? Is that what the rumors mills are goin’ with?”

Sally looked startled by his reaction “If they aren’t apprentices what are they?”

“They’re kids,” Technoblade said flatly “And I’m doing my best to keep ‘em safe,”

“For some reason, I don’t believe that.” Sally said “They say that those kids *killed* people. They say you murdered some crime lord and ripped off her wings,”

Technoblade scoffed, swallowing back his irritation and a flash of fear. The last thing he needed was Phil finding out about the trip he paid Heza from someone else. He was going to have to own up to that one sooner rather than later. Or never. But he first needed to worry about the fact that his reputation also bit him in the ass sometimes. “First of all, I did not rip off her wings. I killed her because she was tryin’ to kill Tommy and Tubbo. Second, I am a person you know,” Technoblade said, perhaps a bit more harshly than he meant to “Despite whatever Wilbur told you, I have feelin’s. And I’m the one who stuck around for Tommy. He’s the one that left his family this time.”

Sally looked taken aback “His family- what did you do to his family?”

Of course, *Of course* . Techno was going to throttle Wilbur when he got his hands on his dramatic neck.

“I’ve protected his family while he hasn’t been here. That’s what I’m tryin’ to do now. That’s why you’re here. Wilbur is Phil’s son. His father is the Angel of Death.” Technoblade explained. Maybe he could’ve been nice about it, but his patience was worn thin- more so with Wilbur than his wife. She had no way of knowing, but it grated him. Techno cared for them. He cared about Tommy and Phil, and Tubbo, and even Ranboo. If he was admittin’ things, he might even admit that he cared about Wilbur, underneath all the hatred and resentment. He didn’t want to be accused of not caring when Wilbur had made it crystal clear that he didn’t want Techno to care about them anymore.

But Wilbur wasn’t here. His sick wife was, who didn’t know any better, so he took a deep breath and tried to calm Chat who was roaring a number of unhelpful things in his ears.

“I...” Sally took a deep breath and leaned back into the pillows “Wilbur didn’t... he never. Why should I believe you?”

Technoblade rubbed his face. He was too tired for this. He was going to kill Wilbur. While he appreciated a healthy dose of suspicion, he was trying to help this woman. “I guess you don’t have any reason to believe me. Wilbur wasn’t wrong about us bein’ killers. I’ve definitely killed more than a few people. But I do have other hobbies. It’d be like sayin’ that Wilbur’s only personality trait is his guitar or somethin’. I mean, it is a big portion of it, but he’s got more depth than that. I do too, despite whatever he told you.”

Sally regarded him warily, but she seemed less likely to make a run for it. Techno wasn't really worried about her actually getting further than the bedroom door, but he didn't really want her to die. “I... assuming that’s all true, you’re here because you’re what, The angel- Phil’s- protege.”

Technoblade grimaced. “That’s not exactly the word I would use. Phil raised me. We didn’t exactly advertise that fact though, obviously. It wouldn’t have been smart to paint me like his kid.”

Technoblade hadn’t meant for that to slip out. e hadn’t called himself Phil’s kid in a long, long time. Since well before his and Wilbur’s fight. He didn’t know why he said it then, but before he could take it back, backtrack, Sally was talking. Her shoulder had relaxed.

“Oh,” Sally said- the adrenaline had abandoned her, apparently, and she was losing the fight with the exhaustion in her body “I see. So you’re Wilbur’s brother.”

Before Technoblade could argue that conclusion because Wilbur had made it *perfectly* clear that Technoblade was not his brother. That he shouldn’t have ever tried. He wasn’t sure anymore, but he didn’t have to say anything because Sally had slipped back into sleep, exhaustion and magical poisoning overcoming her.

“I got some fresh water,” Tubbo announced, perhaps a bit too loudly as he burst through the door.

Technoblade shot him a flat look, but Tubbo was nonplussed as he sat down the bowl of cold water. “Oh, she’s still sleeping. Were you talking to chat?”

Technoblade had never explicitly told Tubbo about that, but he wasn’t surprised that he knew- he hadn’t tried to hide it and Tubbo was sharp. It was still jarring when Tubbo mentioned it.

“No, she woke up for a minute, got a little freaked out because she recognized me, then passed back out.” Technoblade said, “It’s a good sign she was able to be conscious at all, though.”

Tubbo hummed. “Ranboo sent me a message a bit ago that they’re almost back. They should be here soon.”

Technoblade nodded. “Wanna sit with her a minute- right now there’s not much to do- just yell if she stops breathin’ or somethin’.”

“If you’re worried about that, should you be leaving a child with her then?” Tubbo asked innocently. Technoblade rolled his eyes.

“Lucky for you Tubbo, I’m not all that worried about her dyin’ right now.” Technoblade reached his hand out, hesitated then awkwardly patted Tubbo’s shoulder. “I’m just goin’ to wait for them downstairs. Phil will come take over.”

“If she dies while I’m up here you have to pay for my therapy,” Tubbo threatened.

“That’d require you to admit that you need therapy,” Technoblade said. No Chat, he definitely wasn’t a hypocrite.

“Fuck off Technoblade,” Tubbo said sweetly, flipping him off.

Techno huffed something that *definitely* wasn’t akin to a laugh and left the room. It wasn’t Technoblade’s room, but Phil’s. Phil would probably insist on sleeping on the couch, or more realistically, not at all until Sally was out of the woods. Phil had realized she was family, and all bets were off. Tommy probably would’ve killed him if he hadn’t anyway.

Tubbo hadn’t been kidding about them being almost home because by the time Techno made it to the bottom of the steps, Tommy and Ranboo were pushing through the door.

Well. Tommy pushed a protesting Ranboo out of the way, so that he could, somewhat ineffective, hold the door for Phil. Phil, who actually had his wings out from under his cloak for once. That was probably because his cloak was wrapped around what Technoblade assumed to be the child in his arms.

“Stop! I’m getting out of the way, Tommy, hey-” Ranboo yelped, clutching at the large bag that was thrown over his shoulder as Tommy elbowed him sharply. Techno didn’t recognize the bag- it must’ve come from Sally’s house “Hey, that hurts! You have bony elbows.”

“Simply have stronger ribs, bitch.” Tommy snapped as Phil attempted to maneuver around him. “You’re causing trouble for Phil and Fundy.”

Fundy, yes, that was the child’s name. It appeared to be smaller than he expected- a baby still.

Technoblade didn’t bother to hide a grimace. “It’s a baby,”

Baby pog!

Baby!

Orphan?

Orphan time!

Murder!

Blood!

Kill The orphan!

Phil laughed- he’d hardly taken his eyes off the bundle, the baby, “Yes, Fundy is a baby Techno. Don’t sound so excited about it,”

“I don’t like babies,” Technoblade said. He was definitely not whining. He was just statin’ his opinion “They’re loud, messy, and annoying,”

“Stop describing Tommy mate,” Phil joked, eyes cutting across the room “You’ll insult him.”

“Oi, I’m not a baby you fucking bitch!” Tommy shouted, launching himself at Technoblade. Techno relatively easily fended off Tommy’s physical onslaught, though there was little he could do about Tommy’s shouting.

“Fuck you Techno, fuck you, I hate you. Go die. Fuck you I’m a big man-”

“Tommy, stop, you’re going to upset Fundy,” Phil chastised after a moment, as Fundy started to fuss.

Techno had expected Tommy to puff up like a small but angry cat. Instead, he slumped almost immediately, and his voice dropped to a much softer, kinder tone. “Hey, little guy,” Tommy said, peering at Fundy “It’s weird seeing you as an actual baby, huh? But don’t mind me. Your uncle Techno was just being a bitch. I had to defend my honor, you’ll understand one day.”

Technoblade’s eyes raised in surprise and he shot Phil a look over Tommy’s head. Phil just shrugged one shoulder, as if to say ‘I don’t fucking know.’

“Where’s Tubbo?” Ranboo asked, sitting the bag down.

“I left him upstairs with Sally,” Techno said “She’s back asleep so I figured they’d be alright for a minute.”

“She was awake?” Phil asked, frowning.

“Briefly,” Technoblade said. “She was confused, then fell asleep,”

Like usually, Phil read exactly what Techno wasn't saying and nodded. “I need to check on her then, make sure she isn’t getting worse. Here, Tommy take Fundy for a second. I’ll be back down in a minute.”

Tommy looked surprised but took Fundy. “I’m going to teach you how to say fuck,” Tommy said decisively.

Technoblade shook his head “I’m sure Wilbur will appreciate that,”

“Wil taught him to swear,” Phil said “I think it’s only fair. Might try damn first mate- babies struggle to say the f sound for a bit,”

“Yeah, but fuck is the best word,” Tommy said, then his face lit up “Fundy, big man, I’m going to teach you to say pog,”

“You understand that pog will be even harder for him to learn right?” Phil said

“Fuck you, Phil, don’t tell Fundy he can’t learn those words. He’ll hear you and it’ll destroy his tiny little baby ego. We can’t have that,”

“I don’t think Fundy understands words yet,” Ranboo interjected tentatively. “I mean, he is literally a baby,”

Tommy gasped, holding Fundy closer to his chest “Fuck you. All of you. I can’t believe you’re speaking of my favorite nephew in this way. You’re all horrible. Fundy, I’m going to raise you to always take my side. And teach you to never ever listen to the haters. Or to Ranboo. He gives shit advice,”

“Nah, he can probably understand Tommy just fine. Tommy is basically a baby anyway,” Technoblade drawled, making sure his face was carefully deadpan.

The look in Tommy's eyes was murderous but worth it. "Bitch Boy," Tommy said lightly, "Please hold Fundy. I'm going to beat the shit out of Technoblade now."

"Uh I don't really want to hold-" Ranboo started, backing away from Tommy.

"Alright Tommy, that's enough," Phil said, cutting Tommy off "I need Tech to come help me check on Sally. You and Ranboo watch Fundy. We won't be long."

"Got it, big man," Tommy said, more seriously than Technoblade really expected him to, before plopping down on a chair, Fundy in his lap. Ranboo, as usual, hovered nervously. Yeah, they'd be fine.

"She knows who we are," Technoblade whispered, the second they were out of earshot, pausing on the steps. "Wilbur, apparently, hasn't exactly been kind in his descriptions of us. She didn't even know that you were his father,"

Technoblade hated to be the bearer of bad news, especially when he knew it would break his heart. He hid it well, but Technoblade knew Phil. Pain flashed across his eyes briefly, and his wings ruffled almost imperceptibly. But Technoblade knew, and immediately a hot flash of anger hit him. Why had Wilbur done this?

He was just a big kid throwing a temper tantrum that could rival the ones that Tommy used to throw. Now that he was pretty sure Wilbur wasn't going to die in a ditch, he was ready to kill him.

"Well, you know how Wilbur is," Phil said, waving a hand "he'll come around, eventually. Hopefully sooner now that we actually have a way to contact him,"

"Maybe," Technoblade scoffed "Sally wasn't exactly coherent, but it didn't seem like Wilbur has been around enough to know that she was sick,"

"We don't know that Techno," Phil said "We'll just have to try and get more out of her when she wakes up,"

—

Tommy had never seen Fundy as a baby.

Now, generally, Tommy was a Big Man. And Big men didn't do mushy shit like feelings, but Big Men were also supposed to protect kids and be badass and shit.

So therefore Tommy would protect Fundy. Tommy hadn't really ever felt protective of Fundy before- he'd been too close to Tommy's age, then aged past him while they were on the SMP. They were really brothers in arms at best and practical strangers at worst.

So while it was odd to see Fundy as a literal baby, it also gave Tommy a new perspective. And a mission.

Protect Fundy and make sure he's the best fucking kid in the world. Fundy was going to be his protege so to speak. Training started with trying to teach Fundy how to say fuck.

“C’mon,” Tommy goaded, looking Fundy directly in the eye. Fundy was propped up on the couch while Tommy sat on the floor, that way Fundy wasn’t intimidated by his massive height. “Say it with me- fuck. Fuck,”

Fundy just let out a squeal of absolute delight and smacked the side of Tommy’s face with his hands, as he babbled a bit of absolutely incomprehensible baby speak. “No, no,” Tommy said “Fuck, you need to say Fuck,”

“Tommy I don’t think it’s working,” Ranboo chimed in “I don’t think a baby that small can say fuck,”

“Who is gonna stop him, the baby police?” Tommy snapped back, before turning back to Fundy.

“Alright Fundy,” He was using a voice he normally reserved for cute animals or small hostile mobs “I know you can do it, just say fuck! Fuck!”

Fundy stared at him a moment before letting out a noise that wasn’t really the word fuck, but it did sound a bit like it started with an F and honestly, that was good enough for Tommy.

“Hey!” Tommy said jumping to his feet, and swung Fundy up with him, who giggled at the sudden movent “Fuck yeah little man! You got it!”

“That was definitely not the right word,” Ranboo said. Tommy ignored him. His negative presence was not welcome during their celebration.

“Ignore him,” Tommy told Fundy, as he placed him back on the couch “Ranboo is just very negative. He’s a gaslighter, a right wrongun, he’s trying to gaslight you,”

“I am not!” Ranboo exclaimed “Tommy! I’m not gaslighting you! He literally didn’t say it!”

“Fundy and I reject your negative vibes,” Tommy said seriously. Fundy babbled something that Tommy took as an agreement “See, Fundy agrees,”

“You know what, I’m not even gonna try and argue that one. Nope. I’m done. I’m going to find Tubbo,” Ranboo declared. He then got up and actually left the room.

“That was rude,” Tommy said to Fundy “That was not very poggers of him, was it, little man? Should I call you little man? It’s kinda weird, considering you were older than me previously,”

Fundy did not seem too concerned by that question, though, to be fair, he was a literal baby.

He wondered how Sally was. Techno and Phil hadn’t been up there very long, but Tommy was concerned. Wilbur would never forgive them if she died. But she wasn’t going to die. Phil would make sure of it. Phil knew how to fix things. He’d fix it.

Tommy paused, as the weight of his own thoughts hit him.

He hadn't even second-guessed them. Not for a second. From the moment he'd all but forced Sally to take their help, Tommy had never once stopped to wonder if Phil or Techno would be willing to help.

If they'd take this seriously.

They both had.

Tommy wasn't sure he even knew what trust felt like anymore but maybe, just fucking maybe, he trusted them.

"Fuck," he said to baby Fundy, who just laughed and tried to bite his hand.

—

"Hey, Tommy,"

Tommy definitely didn't startle awake when Technoblade called his name. Nope. That would imply he was both startle-able and asleep. Neither of which he was.

"What's up, big T," Tommy said, adjusting his grip on Fundy, who'd fallen asleep beside him. He really wasn't sure how long he'd been not-sleeping, but the sky outside had darkened so it had been a couple of hours, at least.

"Phil has Sally settled and thinks she's stable for the night," Technoblade said "Tubbo and Ranboo are over at the house, but I wanted to see if you were up for a little book translation,"

Tommy just really wanted to hand Fundy over to someone else and go to bed. But, Tommy had picked up on a few of Technoblade's tells over time. It was minute but his hands were twitching. He was restless. He needed to do something and-

Well.

The book needed translation. If Wilbur came home Tommy wanted to be able to tell him about what had happened. What was happening. He wanted to tell him everything when he got the chance.

(and he was also going to beat the shit out of Wilbur, but that was to be expected)

And the fucking book needed to be translated to do it.

"Alright," Tommy said, with a slightly dramatic sigh "But someone needs to take Fundy, so he doesn't spit up or something equally gross in there,"

"Phil said he'd take him, he's waiting upstairs for us,"

"What, can his old knees not take the stairs?" Tommy jokes, hoisting Fundy into his arms. Fundy stirred, whining in displeasure at the interruption.

“Shh, don’t say it so loud. Phil’s a little sensitive about his knees capabilities,” Technoblade deadpanned back, but a hint of a grin played at his lips.

“Hear that Fundy, your grandpa is an old bird,” Tommy stage whispered to Fundy as they got to the top of the steps, making direct eye contact with Phil, who was waiting for them as promised “A big old bird with a fragile ego,”

“Oi, mate,” Phil said, not even pretending to be actually angry, “Are you disparaging me to my grandson?”

“I’m simply speaking my truth Philza,” Tommy said, offering Fundy out to Phil, who took him with practiced ease “Are you trying to silence me?”

“I’d never,” Phil said “I’m offended you accuse me of such things. Or of a fragile ego,”

“Truth hurts,” Tommy sniffed, “Now, go babysit old man. We have important work to do,”

“Oh I see how it is, I’ve been downgraded to nurse and babysitter,” Phil joked. He looked down at Fundy and grinned “Do you see how they treat me around here. No respect for their elders,”

“So you’re admittin’ you’re old?” Technoblade countered.

Phil’s wings flared a little as he turned on his heel “Oh that’s it, you lot have fun. I’m going to hang out with Fundy. He’s my new favorite,”

“I thought you didn’t play favorites?” Tommy called after Phil, who only flipped him off in response.

“You ready?” Techno asked after Phil had vanished into another room.

“I guess,” Tommy said with a shrug, “You gonna get Ranboo over here?”

“Ranboo actually did a little work on his own earlier while you were napping and there’s pretty much just a few things I need to get with the translation books. I don’t think we’ll need him for the next couple entries,” Technoblade explained as he pushed the door to the office open, “We should be able to knock them out tonight, between the two of us,”

Tommy felt more dread than anything, but it needed to be done, and TommyInnit wasn't a pussy. So he swallowed that shit down and gave Technoblade his best smile, “Let’s fucking get it then,”

—

Tommy was having a no good, terrible, very bad time.

He’d expected lots of shit from Karl’s journal, but he hadn’t really expected Dream’s name to come up so soon. Technoblade hadn’t seen it yet- Tommy had taken the second half and was piecing together the words that Ranboo had translated, and the words that Technoblade had gotten, to make sense of the sentences

Was he ready for this?

He didn't know.

He didn't know.

"How's it going over there?" Technoblade asked "I've finished the first half,"

"Slow going, real fucking slow," Tommy grumbled, hoping that if he didn't look up Techno wouldn't catch his lie. He was almost done. "I'm too tired for this,"

That wasn't entirely a lie. Tommy was still exhausted. His adrenaline crash was hitting him hard. That didn't mean Tommy didn't feel a little guilt when Technoblade hesitated, and then softened slightly.

"Hmm, well, why don't we take a break for the night. I'm getting tired of sitting anyway," Technoblade said "I'll read my part and we'll get yours next time,"

"Sounds good," Tommy said "I'm tired enough to start seeing shit. Hallucinating. That's not very pog,"

"Sure," Technoblade said, giving him an odd look "Anyway this is what it says-

2/2/XXXX

I still haven't been anywhere, and it's far, far worse. The main SMP had to be evacuated, due to the Egg's take over. The vines are everywhere now- they are smothering out the grass and buildings are starting to crumble, from the weight. They can't be broken by hoes anymore- not even an enchanted one, and pickaxes take forever to break through them. They've also... I don't know if sentience is the right word but I think they're starting to move on their own. It's eerie, how fast you can watch them slither across the ground, growing so rapidly. I have a very, very bad feeling. We realized we had to get out when they started trying to grab at our ankles when you walked too closely.

Bad, Ant, and Ponk have all been recruiting, too. Ponk got taken a couple of days ago and we lost Purpled, Niki, and Jack this week to the vines. No one has seen Connor in weeks. They're possessed according to Sapnap, who managed to hold them off while I grabbed my books. Puffy is missing in action and may be a prisoner, as she was last seen fighting Bad and Antfrost while the rest of us escaped. She... she sacrificed herself for us, I think and I wish we could do something for her.

We can't afford a rescue mission right now, though. Eret, Q, Sap, and George are with me, heading out towards... well I'm not sure where exactly. Away from the vines."

Tommy, with every fucking time they translate more of the damn journal, felt his dread grow. That sounded bad. And... of course, Puffy would do that. Of course she would.

"Is Purpled the Bedwars kid?" Technoblade asked, pulling him out of his thoughts about Puffy. She is just another person to protect, along with everyone else Karl had listed. Tommy didn't want to protect them.

“Yeah,” Tommy said, “Weird ass fucker, kept to himself. Dunno much about him. I think he and Punz were friends or something. Anyway, I’m- I’m fucking tired. I want to go to bed. We’ll work on this tomorrow or something,”

Technoblade, for a split second, looked like he wanted to protest, but ultimately didn’t. “Alright, get some sleep, Tommy, “

“Night,” Tommy mumbled as he practically dashed for the door. He hoped Techno hadn’t noticed the paper with his translation crumpled up in his hand that read,

“ Sam has the prison in lockdown and refuses to leave. He said that he has to keep the egg from getting to Dream and keep the prison secure, no matter what happens. I think he knows it’s a death sentence, but he hasn’t really been the same since Tommy died. Apparently, Dream went off the rails when he was informed Tommy died, alternating between rage and laughter. I don’t even want to think about those specific implications. Dream scares me these days. I don’t... I don’t remember him always scaring me. I couldn’t do what Sam does.

Sam... well, I’m writing this down so I don’t forget that sacrifice.or Puffy’s. I don’t know where we’re going- I’m not sure any of us do- but we still aren’t totally out of the vines. They give me a headache to be around, and earlier Q got tangled in them and they made him sick. We have to keep going. “

—

“Tommy, Tommy, Tommy,” Tubbo chanted as he poked Tommy’s side repeatedly. Tommy had woken up the second the door opened, but he really, really didn’t want to move. It’d been nearly midnight when he’d left Techno and he really was tired.

“G’way,” Tommy muttered, burying his face into his pillow.

“Tommy, you gotta get up!” Tubbo insisted, resorting to pulling on his arm “Phil said he needs to talk to you,”

Tommy couldn’t quite help the turn in his stomach at that. He knew it was fine. Phil- Phil wasn’t going to kick him out, or turn on him at this point. He just wasn’t. That didn’t mean his instincts got the fucking memo.

“Fine, fine,” Tommy grumbled as he rolled out of bed, shoving Tubbo’s arm away “Go bother Boob boy or something,”

“He’s at least less grumpy in the morning than you,” Tubbo grouched, sticking his tongue out “Anyway, Phil’s already waiting,”

“Alright, whatever, I’ll be down in a minute,” Tommy said, waving Tubbo off. Who thankfully exited the room so that Tommy could change into his clothes for the day. Tommy was still amazed that Phil let him pick out like seven of the same outfit without complaint.

A few minutes later, Tommy went downstairs, then across the lawn briefly, and entered the other house. “Phil!” He yelled as he slammed the door open. Immediately, he heard Fundy

start to cry from somewhere in the house

Oops. he'd forgotten about that.

A few seconds later Phil came around the corner, looking vaguely frazzled, Fundy was in his arms, crying, and Phil looked, okay he looked a little irritated.

"I'd just gotten him to sleep," Phil said, perhaps a touch desperately. "Tommy, mate, why? Sally slept through the night, for the most part. She woke up briefly and demanded to see Fundy, so I had to wake him up. She fell right back asleep, but Fundy's been awake for hours,"

"Sorry Phil," Tommy said and he really did mean it "I didn't think about it,"

"I know, I know just- try to be more careful, alright," Phil said with a sigh, and Tommy managed to mostly repress a flinch. Phil wasn't mad. He wasn't going to get angry. He wasn't mad. That didn't stop Tommy's hands from twitching, reaching instinctively into his inventory for *something* . Maybe a sword. He didn't know.

"What did you have Tubbo drag me out of bed for?" Tommy asked, changing the subject, forcing a smile.

Phil stared at him blankly for a second, before his face lit up with comprehension "Oh, right! Techno said that you didn't need to mope around the house all day- he wants to do some new training exercise with you. He offered to take Tubbo and Ranboo, but they didn't want to go- I don't think you get a choice mate,"

"Why the fuck not?" Tommy demanded, even though realistically he knew he wanted to go and that he would. That still wasn't very fair, in his opinion. Technoblade was playing reverse favoritism. "Why is he bullying me, Phil?"

"He's not bullying you," Phil admonished "He's trying to help you. Ranboo offered to come by this afternoon and watch Fundy for a bit while I napped. Tubbo has some project he's working on or something, I dunno. Anyway, Techno is probably worried about you- I know the two of you got some stuff translated- I've not gotten a chance to read it yet, but I know he mentioned you didn't take it real well,"

Tommy scowled. Why did they have to talk about his feeling and shit behind his back? Besides, Tommy personally thought that he'd taken it perfectly well.

"Technoblade doesn't worry about me," Tommy grumbled, even though he was like 63% sure that wasn't entirely true. "And I took what we translated just fine. Technoblade just has no scope of emotional capacity,"

"Whatever you say, mate," Phil said lightly, patting him on the shoulder as he walked by. Tommy just rolled his eyes. "Anyway, he's waiting for you near one of the general entrance Bedwars tournaments- I think he said Lobby 3? I dunno but you better hurry up and go on,"

Tommy sighed dramatically "Alright, whatever, but if this is stupid, I'm leaving him there,"

“Mhmm,” Phil said and Tommy did not appreciate the skepticism in his tone. He was telling the truth. Fuck you. “Be safe- make sure you both eat lunch!”

“Yes, Dad,” Tommy said sarcastically, as he headed out the door, slamming it shut behind him for good measure. He was about halfway down the street when he realized what he’d said. When it hit him he stumbled, managing to tumble down onto the cobblestone, in front of like twelve people.

“Fuck,” Tommy muttered, sprawled onto the ground, staring up at the sky.

—

Technoblade was going to wring Tommy’s neck.

Murder pog?

Finally!

No!

Not Tommy!

E

TechnoProtect not Techno attack!

If u kill Tommy, i will sing the duck song forever

Tommy, no!

Hey, got any grapes?

Bad Techno!

Murder Tommy!

Kill the child

E

He is an orphan technically-

No!

E

Subscribe!

Tommy protect!

No Chat, not literally, calm down.

It was tempting though. He was supposed to be there already and while- look, okay, Technoblade didn't exactly care about impressing Dream, he'd already made them wait out the first one. He'd made up some lie about it not being the right map (it totally was, Techno just had to bullshit his way into a new, worse map which was kinda cringe) and now he was waiting for Tommy to show up. This was supposed to be a training exercise for everyone involved! Tommy would do well to fight someone that wasn't him or Phil, but that had relatively comparable skills.

Dream... well Techno didn't really care about dream improving but Bedwears was more fun than their one on one spars. It added an extra level of competition and Technoblade was all about it.

Techno also had too much energy. sTill riding adrenaline from the day before, egged on by an overactive Chat, he needed to blow off some steam.

Besides, Tommy hadn't looked great the night before. He'd just bother Phil or something if Techno didn't drag him out. Besides, Tommy could use a distraction. He knew Tommy was thinking about Wilbur. It was kinda hard not to, considering his wife was dying in their house.

But. It was awkward, okay? And Technoblade didn't really want Dream knowin' everything about him- and he didn't want to tell him who Tommy was, just because he wanted the fight to be authentic.

But if Tommy didn't show up, the fight would get really authentic.

"C'mon Technoblade," Dream said "Let's get in the lobby! The game is gonna start soon,"

Technoblade frowned, though he wasn't sure Dream could see it beneath the mask. Dream's own mask covered his facial expressions well, though he wore his emotions on his sleeve and especially in his voice.

"Alright, yeah, let's go in," Technoblade agreed.

If Tommy wanted to blow him off, fine. See if Technoblade ever helped him train again.

They both entered the lobby, and there was only a slot for one more- Technoblade had set it up so that spot was reserved for Tommy if he deigned to show his presence of course.

As... erratic as Tommy was though, he felt like Tommy would at least send a message. Or Phil would, at the least, letting him know that Tommy was throwin' a hissy fit.

Maybe Phil had forgotten to wake him up.

Maybe something had happened? Hypixel was safe, but Tommy obviously had enemies. Maybe a few of Heza's men had found them, after all this time. (Technoblade assumed they wouldn't since she was, y'know. Dead. But maybe someone wanted revenge). Maybe whoever gave them the book decided they wanted it back. Maybe whoever it was that

Tommy was afraid of, that haunted his night terrors. Someone that scared him more than Technoblade had.

No. No. Tommy was fine. He was fine. Technoblade was overreacting. That's why he didn't like caring about people. He always got too worked up. Tommy would be-

"Sorry!" the tension bled out of Technoblade's shoulders as Tommy careened into the lobby, taking his place in the last slot, "Sorry, I'm here,"

The worker glared at him but shut the gate behind him. Tommy had about three seconds to spare.

Techno saw him scanning the lobby, probably looking for Technoblade, but the floor vanished beneath them before he got a chance. Oh well. If he'd have arrived earlier, that wouldn't have been a problem, would it?

Technoblade adjust his mask, after he spawned on his island, and pulled out the wooden sword.

This was going to be *fun* .

—

Technoblade hadn't spawned by Tommy or Dream, but that was fine. They were easy enough to take out- these were general lobbies for the most part and had lots of kids who barely knew how to hold a sword.

It was almost therapeutic, dispatching them with ease. And it was easy. Laughably easy, even. Which is why he laughed as he knocked some thirteen-year-old into the void.

"L," he said, as they fell and another opponent was removed from the field. He could see Dream on the next island over- he'd apparently already taken care of whoever was on that one, and he was headed straight for Technoblade.

"Finally, a challenge," Technoblade muttered, adjusting the grip on his sword. Chat cheered loudly as always, but then, suddenly, pivoted, half of the beginning to call out a warning-

Behind you!

Watch out!

Stabbing, innit!

Technoblade didn't even have time to turn before a sword connected with his back. Perhaps, if he'd been more prepared from the reserve attack, if he'd not been so concentrated on Dream, he'd have been able to block the next hit.

He was at least able to face Tommy, who was grinning ferociously before the next hit was landed, and a swift kick to his legs sent him off the side of the island. He desperately tried to place a block, but it was too late.

He fell over the edge, to the sound of Tommy's maniacal laughter and closed his eyes, bracing for the respawn.

When he hit the barrier he felt the magic take over, an odd, fizzing feeling. But, instead of landing back on his island, he was on the spectator platform.

He couldn't help but grin a little "He got my bed too,"

Tommy probably would've lost the straight-up fight- Techno still bested him more often than not, but he'd used the element of surprise to his advantage. It was a smart move. And if Techno calculated correctly (and he usually did), it was only Tommy and Dream left.

That would be an interesting match, to see how their fighting styles clashed.

Technoblade watched as Tommy turned, just as Dream finished the bridge over eagerly, finally noticing the new threat. Technoblade had expected a lot of things from Tommy- a normal fight, perhaps to watch him shit talk Dream or any number of things. He was already making notes for Tommy about form. He expected to watch a decent fight between them and wasn't convinced that Dream would be the winner.

What he hadn't expected was the sheer terror on Tommy's face as he froze in place.

—

"Are you sure you haven't heard from her," Wilbur asked for approximately the fifth time that day?

He knew that, realistically, Schlatt was a grown man who knew very well exactly how to read his comm and see if he had notifications. However, it was very unlike Sally to not have sent anything in over two days.

"Dude, if you ask me that one more fucking time, I'm gonna rip your tongue out," Schlatt threatened, waving a bottle in his general direction. Wilbur rolled his eyes, as he continued to bottle up the last of their potion batch.

"Fuck off man, I'm just a little worried," Wilbur snapped "I know you don't believe in emotions or whatever, but I am a human being Schlatt,"

"Hmm, that's debatable- the part about you being human anyway. I think you're mostly just a bastard. I think you're mostly just a bastard," Schlatt said "But why don't you check your own comm. I know you have one. Maybe Sally got tired of using me as the middle man- I'm fucking tired of being your middle man,"

"My comm is still busted up," Wilbur lied easily "It doesn't work right,"

"Yeah, see I don't believe you," Schlatt countered, "I think there's- there's some other shit going on you're just too much of a pussy to deal with,"

"Shut up, you don't know what you're saying,"

“I think I do,” Schlatt said, ignoring Wilbur’s gritted teeth “I think you abandoned something- or you’re running from someone. Listen, man, I get it, we’ve all got demons, but if you’re gonna lie about it, at least be believable,”

Wilbur felt his stomach twist as he bit back his immediate answer. He’d abandoned *nothing* . Wilbur had every right to leave. He wouldn’t let someone else shame him for doing something for himself for once in his fucking life. But, Schlatt didn’t need to know that.

“Can’t, you, just for once, Schlatt, consider that maybe it’s none of your fucking business,” Wilbur exclaimed, slamming his hand down on the table “You don’t have to know everything. Besides, you wouldn’t even give a shit if I told you,”

“Touchy tonight aren’t we,” Schlatt said, raising his hands in mock surrender “What, do you miss your wife?”

“As a matter of fact, I do,” Wilbur said “I know that you’re so drunk these days that your heart probably doesn’t even have the capacity to feel, but I do miss Sally and Fundy. Now, go sober up before tonight- our contract ends at the end of the week and I don’t want your drunk ass to fuck that up,”

Schlatt glowered at him, but rose from the table, swaying on his feet a little “Alright, whatever, Wilbur. But seriously, if you’re so worried, don’t be a pussy. Just message her yourself.”

Wilbur sighed as Schlatt slammed the door on his way out. He could go dig his comm out of the bag it was stored in, tucked in the very back corner, under his bed. He could message Sally and assuage his fears.

But...

She was fine. Wilbur knew that he had a tendency to get worked up. He just needed to relax. Schlatt was right- he was being a bit emotional. She is probably just busy- she was raising a baby after all.

Besides, he... he couldn’t bring himself to check it yet. Not now.

“Tomorrow,” Wilbur promised himself, “If Schlatt doesn’t hear anything tomorrow I’ll get mine out,”

Wilbur knew that everything would be fine. Hypixel was the safest server out there, more or less. On the off chance, anyone that knew him was there, they certainly would have no way of knowing her, and the odds of them meeting were slim to none.

He just needed to get his head on straight, finish out their potions contract, and go find his family. Then they’d be together. He’d never leave them again if he could help it.

Wilbur wouldn’t let Fundy grow up like he had. Even if that meant avoiding his- Phil and the others at all cost.

Even if that meant letting Tommy succumb to the cruel fate the universe had bestowed on him. Wilbur couldn't save him this time. Tommy made his choice, just like Technoblade had a few years ago.

Wilbur had just had the balls to make his own choice this time.

Chapter End Notes

1) Well. Happy New Year! almost! figured I'd give 2021 a send off with a chapter of this fic! hope you enjoyed. it was going to be out earlier but i got a new game and have been playing it nonstop

2) Wilbur. Soon. I swear. also some characters previously introduced will make an appearance.

3) in the nicest way possible i'm so ready to finish this fic. we're on month 11. I love it,,, but i've got SO many ideas. but i will finish this fic if it kills me so help me god. I've still got Plans for it though, so don't yall worry. I still love it.

4) I made a discord. <https://discord.gg/X42zA8vm> it's not very active bc I have no idea what I'm doing but pls feel free to join. I'm just a person. idk what i'm doing, at any point, ever. feel free to like. just talk abt your day or w/e. it's not really abt me so much as I just wanna meet ppl.

5) Love you guys /parasocial. be kind, drink water, take a nap, go look at the sunset, eat some diced fruit, take a screen break, be well. you all are wonderful and i'm glad we spent 2021 together! cheers!

a revelation, some kind of resolution

Chapter Summary

Dream and Tommy finally meet, Phil just wants to protect his flock, and Wilbur has another bad day.

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

Tommy was having a good time- perhaps even a great time! He could perhaps even be tempted into telling Technoblade that his idea hadn't been total shit. It was also a good distraction from thinking about the fact that he'd called Phil dad, which he wasn't worried about at all fuck off, that wasn't stressing him out.

He was just enjoying kicking ass.

It was especially sweet since he'd just kicked *Technoblade's* ass. Maybe it wasn't a one-on-one fair fight, but he'd still managed to knock Technoblade into the void after setting his bed on fire. It was satisfying and he couldn't help but laugh as Techno tried and failed to save himself.

"Eat shit, bitch," He yelled into the void, even though he was pretty sure that Technoblade couldn't hear him anymore.

To his left, he heard the sound of someone placing a block. Another contender? Hell yeah, Tommy was going to kick their ass. He'd just defeated Technoblade of all people! This was going to be a piece of-

It was only his training and instincts that kept Tommy's sword in his hand, as he watched Dream place a block and jump down toward the platform.

His breath caught in his chest, freezing as ice filled his veins. This wasn't happening, *this wasn't happening*.

But- fuck, it *was*. Blood rushed to his head, as his heart leapt into his throat. It was Dream, no doubt. He'd know that stance, that walk, that mask anywhere. It was Dream. He had a sword- Dream wasn't even asking him to throw it down, just advancing, just coming for him.. He was going to attack, Tommy knew Dream, he knew when he was going to attack. Dream was going to kill him for... for everything.

Dream was going to kill him. That was the only thought that he had, the only thing he could focus on.

He was going to die,. Dream was going to kill him.

He was frozen. His mind was split, telling him to run, telling him to fight, telling him to get on his knees and beg. *Beg* for Dream's forgiveness for what he'd done. All the things that he'd done that Dream wouldn't approve of. Beg for forgiveness for putting him in prison, and for daring run away from him at all. He was terrified. He could hear the ocean in the distance.

"That's impressive kid," Dream said, swinging his sword around so that it glinted in the light, light some sort of sick fucking joke. Tommy's stomach twisted and he managed to bring his sword up, just in time to block the hit, but it sent him staggering back, as his heart pounded from fear. He needed to fight. He needed to run. He couldn't *think* . "I've never seen anyone take Technoblade out in so few hits,"

"Fuck you," Tommy managed to croak, as he blocked another hit. Why was Technoblade in Logsteadshire? Hadn't Dream banned visitors? It didn't matter though. Dream was fucking *toying* with him. He was going to kill him.

"Oh, hostile are we?" Dream asked lightly and Tommy got the horrible impression that he was smiling. "But why aren't you fighting me? C'mon kid, I know you can-"

Tommy couldn't do it. He wasn't going to let Dream kill him again. Not again. Not now. He needed to escape. He could escape. He could run. Tommy could *run* . Tommy managed to brush past Dream, who shouted insults. He could hear Dream running behind him. He needed to think. He needed to get away. He didn't want to die-

He scrambled over whatever was in his way, and it felt oddly like wool, rather than the stony sand of Logsteadshire. Had Dream placed obstacles? Tommy wasn't even seeing, trusting his feet as his mind raced for a plan. He needed a plan. A plan like Wilbur, or - or Techno. He needed- what did he need to do?. Tommy yelped as his foot caught on something, and he tumbled face-first into a wood floor.

A wood floor? There weren't any in Logsteadshire. Dream had blown them up. Hadn't he? Tommy couldn't think. "C'mere kid!" he heard Dream calling behind him "Don't run from me! Just fight me!"

Tommy didn't have time to follow that train of thought as he scrambled to his feet. He had to run- he couldn't run. There wasn't anywhere to go but a cliff in front of him. They were so fucking high up, Tommy wasn't even sure if the ocean was below. And it didn't matter. Dream would catch him, Dream always caught him.

He'd have to fight. He didn't want to fight Dream.

He wanted to fight him. He wanted to kill him.

He wanted to go home. The thought struck him, in the middle of his panic, but what he pictured wasn't L'manburg. He didn't have time to think about what he was really picturing, not when Dream was there, coming in hot. He'd kill Tommy for running like this.

Tommy's hands shook more than he cared to admit as he raised his sword, and faced Dream. They traded blows, Tommy barely keeping a grip on his sword as Dream pummeled him. Tommy's hands were shaking too badly to try and disarm him. Tommy blindly kicked out and surprisingly made contact with Dream. "Fuck you," Tommy snapped, regretting the words instantly.

Dream grunted and his attack relented long enough for Tommy to scramble back a few feet, teetering dangerously close to the edge. Could he get away if he towered?

"Oh come on, don't run!" He heard Dream call and his blood ran cold. He couldn't run. He was going to die. His sword couldn't save him.

What did he have in his inventory? A firecharge? That didn't- Tommy didn't care how it got it. He threw it down, jumping as it exploded, allowing it to boost him up so that he landed down hard on Dream, who'd just reached him.

It was supposed to anyway.

Instead, it launched Tommy in the wrong direction. He screamed as the ground vanished beneath him, as an explosion rang in his ears. He was falling. He was flying. His tower? Had he fallen from his tower. He was in the void. He was drowning. It was the ocean, cold and endless and-

He respawned.

His knees hit the ground, but instead of water, or sand, it was... it was glass. There wasn't a glass floor in Logsteadshire.

Tommy gasped, a shuddering breath as he staggered to his feet, looking around wildly. Where was Dream? Where was-

Tommy almost choked. This wasn't... he wasn't in Logsteadshire. He was in a bedwards game.

Dream was in his Bedwars game with Technoblade.

Logsteadshire didn't even exist yet.

None of it was...

"Tommy?" And there was Technoblade standing in front of him, blocking him from view of the handful of people still in the observer lobby. He had never been more glad winners spawned in a different spot. "Tommy, what's wrong?. What happened down there? You froze"

Tommy just shook his head, probably a little too violently, but he couldn't help it. He wanted to run, he wanted to *run*. It was only sheer willpower that kept him still. "I-I-Not now," Tommy managed "Fuck, fuck, *fuck* . I've gotta, I *can't* - Can we go home. I'll tell you later I swear, but fuck. I need to pull it-"

“Yeah, yeah, kid, let’s get you home,” Technoblade said, cutting him off. Technoblade turned to the people standing behind him. “What are you all lookin’ at? If you don’t have anything better to do that’s kinda lame,”

Tommy allowed Technoblade to usher him out of the room. He wasn’t sure what happened on the walk home- Technoblade moved quickly and must’ve been glaring like a bitch, because the crowd parted like the fucking ocean for them.

Tommy trailed behind him, trying to get his lungs to fill with air. They wouldn’t. He kept looking over his shoulder, scanning the faces of the crowd, terrified that he’d see that fucking mask looming among them.

Every flash of white or flash of green had him reaching for his sword, pressing closer to Technoblade. Tommy couldn’t read his face under the mask but he could read the tense lines of Tehcnoblade’s shoulders. Was he angry? Technoblade looked angry. He walked like he did into L’manburg before he destroyed it the second time.

But, he was better off with Technoblade, even a furious one. No matter what Technoblade did to him, how angry he was, it was better than being with Dream.

Because it was *Dream* . Dream was here. Dream had seen him.

But, Dream didn’t know him. Dream had no reason to care about him. He tried to tell himself that, digging his nails into his palms hard enough to draw fucking blood. He was being ridiculous. Stupid.

That didn’t stop Tommy from looking for him everywhere, unable to relax until the door was locked behind him in the house. Technoblade lead him to the couch, which Tommy couldn’t bring himself to sit on- he couldn’t relax yet. He wrapped his arms around his middle, pressing them tightly, and he looked off to the side, glaring at the hardwood.

“Alright, what happened down there?” Technoblade asked. Tommy briefly wondered if Phil had heard them come in; if he’d come down and listen. Tommy... Tommy wanted him to. “I’ve never seen you freeze like that during a fight- not even when you fought me that first time,”

There was something unspoken there- who were you more scared of than me?

“Boys? I didn’t think you’d be back yet!” Phil called from the top of the steps. Tommy couldn’t help but flinch at the sudden noise, pressing his arms in tighter against his sides. It wasn’t Phil’s fault. Tommy heard him come down the steps, and could practically feel the weight of Technoblade’s gaze on him and forced himself to raise his head to meet his gaze. The question was clear in Technoblade’s red eyes-he was letting Tommy call the shots.

Tommy nodded minutely. He-he wanted Phil. Phil... Phil would protect him. He wanted nothing more than to just run to Phil, or even into Technoblade’s arms and hide in wings or under a cape, like he had when he was a little kid.

Hide under a cloak like he did when he’d been under Technoblade’s protection the first time.

But he couldn't do that. He had to keep his shit together. He wasn't a little kid anymore. He wasn't weak.

"We're down here Phil," Technoblade called, not taking his eyes off Tommy "In the living room,"

"What happened? You two didn't get kicked out, did you?" Phil joked as he rounded the corner. Fundy was nowhere in sight, at least. Tommy wasn't sure if it was better or worse. As soon as his eyes landed on Tommy his face was pale and Tommy immediately dropped his gaze. "The fuck happened you two? Are either of you hurt? What's wrong Tommy?"

Tommy swallowed hard, jaw working. Fuck this was so much harder than he thought it'd be.

"We were doing a Bedwars match for training," Technoblade supplied, giving Tommy a moment to even think of how to start, "I'd invited Dream, since I thought it'd be good for Tommy to fight someone... competent who wasn't me. Get a feel for other types of fighting so that we could work on new blocks and combats in training,"

Tommy's breath hitched, "You invited him?" Tommy hissed, unable to stop himself as his eyes snapped up to Technoblade "You-you invited him to the game?"

"Dream is your friend from training rings, right Techno?" Phil asked and Tommy could feel himself trembling, as his breath came faster.

Technoblade was on Dream's side. He was on Dream's side. Fuck, fuck, fuck, of course, he was. Of course, they were friends. This was bad, this was-

"Friends is a strong word," Technoblade protested, but Tommy couldn't bring himself to care. Not when they were allies, or friends, or combat murder buddies, or whatever they considered one another.

"Tommy, Tommy, mate are you ok? Shit, Techno he's freaking out," Tommy heard Phil say distantly.

Tommy couldn't help it. He felt like he was going to be sick.

He felt like he was drowning.

"You said you promised," Tommy finally managed to choke out, cutting off whatever the others were saying, trying to get him to calm down "Technoblade, you swore, you swore that-that you'd keep me safe from him,"

Technoblade, who'd been fidgeting on the couch as he'd talked to Phil, froze.

"Tommy," Technoblade said lowly, "Is... is Dream the one that- is he the one that killed you the first two times? The one from your night terrors?"

—

Phil remembered the night terrors.

That wasn't to say Tommy didn't still have *nightmares*. Phil heard them less, sure, but he'd have to be a fool to not notice that Tommy still had them. The night terrors, and the screaming, had considerably slowed in recent months.

Phil didn't think Tommy had actually had a night terror in months- almost certainly not since they'd moved to Hypixel. He wasn't sure he'd ever forget Tommy's screams though. Especially not the night it all came to a head. Phil had never felt quite so helpless.

"I dreamt about him that night," Tommy admitted finally. He still wasn't sitting, arms wrapped around himself like he did when he'd first come to live with Phil and still hadn't been sure if Phil was going to throw him out for simply existing. "I-I have nightmares about him lots of fucking times. But that night terror I dreamt-I,"

Tommy's voice cracked and Phil ached to wrap him up in his arms, hide Tommy beneath his wings and never let the world see his son again.

Of course, Phil wasn't sure if touching Tommy was a good idea, so he stayed perched on the couch, swallowing down his own emotions.

"It's okay, Phil prompted gently "Take your time mate,"

"I dreamt he made me kill all of you. Then it was just the two of us the, like exile all over again," Tommy said. "But yeah. Dream... Dream was the fucking bad guy, I think- no, I *know* he was. He was the server admin. He was the one we fought the war against. He took my first two lives. Made Tubbo exile me and- and exile was hell. There's more but- but Dream's the one, that fucker. And when I saw him today, I just..."

"You were scared," Technoblade prompted flatly. His voice was empty but Phil could see it in the lines of Technoblade's shoulders and the set of his jaw. He was furious and Chat was likely screaming.

"I thought Dream was going to kill me," Tommy snarled "Of course, I was fucking scared Technoblade! And you- you're the one that brought him to me!"

Phil's eyes widened, catching Technoblade's briefly, who looked just as surprised, if not more horrified, as realization dawned. Phil didn't have time to comfort Technoblade though. "Tommy," He said softly but Tommy ignored him, staring resolutely at the floor again.

"Tommy, I didn't know," Technoblade said, "I wouldn't have let him be on the same server if I'd have known,"

The rage was just barely simmering beneath the surface. Phil knew it had been killing Technoblade not to know- to know that someone had terrified Tommy, more so that they had even, and that he couldn't do anything. Now that rage had a target besides himself.

Phil couldn't help but relate to that.

But, apparently, that was enough for Tommy. The fight drained out of him as Phils watched his shoulders sag and Tommy collapse onto the couch, trembling like a leaf.

“I know,” Tommy said, deflating so suddenly Phil halfway thought that he'd topple “I know, I know. And that's part of why I didn't fucking tell you. I need- I need to deal with this. I was trying to work through it. I can't-I can't be a fucking mess. I can't run from Dream forever!”

“You're right,” Tehcnoblade said “You won't have to because I'm going to kill him.”

“No!” Tommy exclaimed, looking back up in alarm, bordering on panic, “No- no Dream's the server admin. He'd probably already created his SMP. I have to get on the server to fight that fucking egg,”

Technoblade looked over at Phil, who really had nothing to offer. If this was true- and Phil believed it was- then Tommy was right as much as it pained him to admit it. If Tommy really needed to get on that server, and Dream was the admin....

“Wait- why not just kill him now? If the admin goes down, then so does the server,” Technoblade said “Unless he's already set up stronger magics, he probably can't support it. It wouldn't be hard for me to get him off Hypixel-”

“It's not that simple,” Tommy said bitterly “There were others- at least two- that had some admin blood and control over the server. They were original members, I think. Probably there already,”

“I don't-”

“That's enough about murdering Dream for now,” Phil cut in, as gently as he could “I think we need to translate that book. See if it's really necessary for Tommy to go back. That Karl fellow- he wasn't exactly talking sense that night. Maybe he was exaggerating,”

From the look on Tommy's face, Phil could tell that he believed that about as much as Phil did himself. Technoblade didn't look pleased either.

“I, uh, also have something to admit,” Tommy added, looking back at the floor. “I lied to you Technoblade,”

“What?” Techno asked frowning “About what?”

“Last night. I told you I didn't translate my page. I did. I just... it talked about Dream. I wasn't ready to have that conversation. See how well that fucking worked out for me,” Tommy muttered darkly. “I stashed the page in my room, under my mattress. Figured it'd give me a couple days to figure out what the fuck I was going to say,”

“Why don't you go get it Technoblade,” Phil said. Technoblade's face was pinched- he probably didn't want to let Tommy out of his sight any more than Phil did, but Phil needed a moment with Tommy, without Technoblade's hardly constrained rage hanging over them.

Technoblade vanished out the door, leaving the two of them alone.

“That's not the whole story, is it Tommy?” Phil said gently, trying not to spook Tommy, who only looked about half present.

“No,” Tommy admitted “It’s- fuck. I don’t want to talk about it anymore. I just don’t want to think about Dream ever again- but that’s never been possible for me. I should’ve never joined that damn server. I should’ve never caused so many fucking problems. If I hadn’t been-”

“Tommy,” Phil said, cutting him off as he got up to move to the couch beside Tommy, who still refused to look at him. “You didn’t do anything to deserve what happened to you. You don’t have to tell me everything Dream did tonight- or even ever if you don’t want to- but no matter what you did, you didn’t deserve it,”

“That’s- that’s not what you said before,” Tommy all but whispered.

Phil felt bile rise in his throat. He thought they’d been over this- that Tommy had maybe gotten past this. “I’m sorry,” Phil whispered “I wish I could fix all the things that I did to you. I’m trying,”

Tommy finally looked up at him, and his eyes weren’t filled with tears like Phil expected but were just exhausted- filled with fear and dread. Phil wished that he wasn’t a huge part of it. “Can I hug you?” Phil asked, unsure if Tommy even wanted him into the same room as him.

For a second Phil wasn’t sure what Tommy would say. He’d gotten much better at reading Tommy’s shuddered expressions, though they’d gotten fewer and further between, his face more and more like his normal, expressive self, but it still threw Phil.

“Please,” Tommy said, voice cracking at the end, and Phil didn’t hesitate to open his arms and Tommy practically threw himself at Phil.

Tommy was trembling as he clung to Phil’s tunic, with a grip like iron. Phil wouldn’t be surprised if he bruised where Tommy’s fingers dug in painfully, but he couldn’t bring himself to care. Phil allowed his wings to wrap around Tommy as best they could.

“It’s alright Tommy,” Phil said softly “We’re here this time. I’m here. I won’t- I’d rather cut off my own wings than hurt you again,”

Phil wasn’t sure if that helped or not, but he needed Tommy to know that. “Dream won’t touch you if I can help it,”

Phil hadn’t imagined his day going like this. Tommy had- probably jokingly- called him dad this morning. It had left him stunned for longer than he cared to admit, and he’d planned to. Well he hadn’t actually figured out how to broach the subject and figured he was just going to let Tommy bring it up, hopefully.

He hadn’t anticipated this- Tommy, panicked and terrified, clinging to him like a child. He had thought perhaps it was a good day. A sign of progress. A... something. He’d been going to pick up a cake tonight and say it was for no reason at all, but in his mind call it a celebration.

~~Maybe this was progress, in some way, that Tommy was seeking comfort from him.~~

They sat like that for a few more minutes, as Tommy's grip slowly loosened and Phil could feel that he was trembling at least a little less.

"Alright," Tommy muttered "I-I let me go"

Phil didn't hesitate to unwrap Tommy from his wings, even if his instincts didn't want to let Tommy go anywhere any time soon, even as Tommy settled back onto the couch. He still looked bad, to be entirely honest, but he wasn't trembling as badly anymore.

"Are you alright?" Phil asked "Mate you still look pale,"

"Sorry, the man who killed me twice, purposefully, chased me with a sword today," Tommy snapped "Not exactly on my fucking A-game Phil,"

Honestly, the snark was a good sign, It lacked the bite of real anger, and meant Tommy felt comfortable enough to start yelling at him again.

"That was a stupid question," Phil agreed "Sorry mate."

"Yeah, whatever, birdbrain," Tommy muttered and Phil squawked in protest, but a little more gently than he normally would. "Anyway, I'm tired of talking about this shi. I can-we can talk more later, but I've got shit to do. Around. You know,"

Tommy's eyes had been roaming the room the entire time he'd been talking, always drawing back to one point- the windows. Tommy was uncomfortable with the front-facing windows. Of course.

"Why don't you go upstairs. Fundy is sleeping in a crib I managed to rummage up, just outside Sally's room. You can go sit by him so he's not alone any longer. I'll be back up in a minute," Phil said.

Tommy obviously didn't need to be alone, and Phil had no idea where Tubbo and Ranboo were. In fact, he was itching to call them home- it wouldn't do any good, since Dream literally had no way of knowing who Tommy was at this point, let alone the two of them, but Phil's instincts were rattled, okay? He was fucking protective and the last thing he wanted was for *his* family to be somewhere else.

He didn't even want to think about Wilbur being just... out there. Phil hadn't even really had time to think about what Technoblade had told him. Sally hadn't known about them- not really. Wilbur had been....

Fuck, Phil really had fucked up. He just wanted Wilbur to be home. He just wanted to apologize. He wanted Wilbur safe there with them. With his wife and son. Phil missed him. But did Phil even deserve to have him home?

Did he-

"Found it," Phil didn't jump, but only because it was Technoblade's familiar voice as the door swung open "It was where he said it was. You... you oughta read it, Phil,"

Phil took the paper that Technoblade offered to him, skimming it as Technoblade settled in a chair across from him.

“They put their admin in jail?” Phil said incredulously “Holy shit Techno, for that to happen.... I kept thinking- *hoping* Tommy was exaggerating,”

“I’m going to kill him,” Technoblade stated, eyes fixed on something just beyond Phil “I’m going to let Chat have just what they want, this time, and rip him limb from *limb* ,”

“Woah there mate,” Phil said, even though he personally thought that was a brilliant idea “I’m not saying that the option isn’t off the table- not like I’d really stop you if you tried, but listen. If this page is to be believed, it also said that Dream... wasn’t always that bad,”

“Phil, listen, I made a promise to Tommy-” Techno started.

“I know you did,” Phil assured him “I know that and I know you want to uphold that- you’re nothing if not a man of your word. But it’s not a good idea to just go in and kill Dream. Not without knowing everything that book says. We could make things worse without knowing it- we could make things worse for Tommy,”

“What, so we just let him walk around?” Technoblade asked, getting to his feet “After how badly Tommy reacted to him? You didn’t see him, Phil, he was terrified outta his mind,”

“Just like he was when he saw us,” Phil reminded him sharply, around the bile that burned in the back of his throat, “Techno he was terrified of us. We haven’t done those things yet. Dream... I’m not saying that we forgive him, or that we give him a chance to do those things again, but we can’t kill him. Yet.”

“I know,” Technoblade admitted. His posture didn’t change, but Phil knew that for the moment, he’d won the argument. It left a bad taste in his mouth “That doesn’t mean I like it,”

“Oh trust me,” Phil said bitterly “I hate it just as much as you do,”

Technoblade let out a long breath that was almost a sigh. “Where is he? I need to make sure that he isn’t doin’ something stupid,”

“Upstairs, watching Fundy,” Phil said “Or, at least that’s where I sent him, I thought that might ground him a little. Listen, Techno, you can check on him, but you need, you gotta go deal with that anger mate, you’ll just freak him out. I’ll make sure he stays with me. I don’t think he’ll want to be alone anyway,”

Technoblade looked down at his hands briefly “I don’t- I wouldn’t hurt him, Phil,”

Phil felt like there wasn’t anything left of his heart to break. He was wrong, looking at Technoblade. “I wasn’t suggesting that. Tommy’s just fragile and while you’ve done a great job, I can see your hands trembling mate,”

Techno clenched his hands “I know, I know. I just- I can’t promise what I’m gonna go do is going to be good. Chat’s angry Phil- more angry than they’ve been in a long time,”

“I don’t care,” Phil said, getting to his feet. He crossed the room to where tEchnoblade was standing, and put a hand on his shoulder “Techno, just come home in one piece, and try not to get arrested. Or get us kicked off the server. Hell, as long as you’re back by night, I don’t care if you go off the server. Just be careful,”

Technoblade nodded stiffly. “Alright, I’ll have my comm on me,”

“Alright mate,” Phil said. He watched Tehcnoblade methodically slip his cloak back on, and pull his boar mask back over his face. “I’m sorry,” He said suddenly, surprising even himself.

“What?” Phil couldn’t see Techno’s face, but it was obvious he was puzzled.

Phil shook his head. The words were stuck somewhere between his brain and his mouth and he wasn’t even quite sure what he meant. He was sorry for... lots of things. He couldn’t say it now- it wasn’t the time. “Nothing, never mind. Just- go. Be safe Techno,”

“You too Phil, Tehcnoblade said, and vanished out the door.

—

When Phil got upstairs, both Fundy and Tommy were gone.

His first instinct was panic, as his heart lept into his throat. He had no doubt that Tommy would rather die than hurt Fundy but he really knew nothing about Dream. Maybe he’d followed Techno home without him realizing. Maybe Tommy had thought he’d seen and made a run for it, taking Fundy with him to protect him. Maybe-

“Oh, uh, hello. Hope I’m not bothering you or any shit like that. Fundy was just fussing and I figured he just wanted to see his mum or some shit,”

Or maybe Tommy was just inside Sally’s room. Where Sally was apparently awake.

Oh. The pure panic was replaced by relief strong enough that it nearly knocked him off his feet and Phil physically felt his wings relax. Fucking ender, he wasn’t made for that kind of panic.

Phil pushed the door open quietly, so as not to startle any of them- Tommy was certainly jumpy and Sally probably wouldn’t be pleased by him bursting in either- and saw Tommy sitting in the chair they’d shoved to the side, holding Fundy up.

He peered and the bed and-

Sally was still unconscious like Phil had left her. Her hair was stuck to her face with sweat, as fever burned her up, and Phil only just managed to keep her from literally burning up. Phil paused at the door, watching as Tommy talked softly- well as softly as Tommy was really capable.

It was odd- it was a voice Phil had only ever heard Tommy use with small animals, and now with fundy. He wasn’t going to pretend that he didn’t see the way that Tommy’s hands

trembled. Phil let it play out for a moment more, but he needed to check on sally- make sure the magic didn't kill her. And he needed to be there for Tommy

"Hey Tommy, And little guy Fundy," Phil said with a smile that he hoped looked more real than it felt, "Was Fundy awake then?"

"Yeah," Tommy said, bouncing Fundy on his knee, as Fundy babbled a little, his ears twitching between tufts of red hair. "He was fussing a little and I figured he'd want to see his mum or something,"

"That was very thoughtful of you Tommy," Phil said, leaning against the wall "I'm sure Fundy appreciates it,"

Tommy shrugged "Of course he fucking does. He appreciates everything I do. . Anyway, how is she? Why isn't she like, waking up and shit?"

"She's very sick," Phil said "Worse off than you were after, well, you know. And you slept for nearly a week. Overdosing on potions is no fucking joke mate,"

"Yeah, yeah, I know," Tommy muttered, "I never exactly got it, but I... that's one thing I fucking miss though. I used to have such a high fucking tolerance and now I don't,"

Phil's stomach turned. You only got your tolerance up by forcing yourself to push limits that weren't healthy. That's what war did though.

"I'm sorry," Phil said quietly because he wasn't sure what else to say. "But... it is concerning. We haven't had much of a chance to talk, since we brought Sally in. Do you have any idea what happened to her? Did this...?"

Tommy shrugged "I don't fucking know. Will never really talked about her, always got all moody and shit if I brought her up or if Fundy did. He just shouted and made us clean shit. So my guess is yeah, she fucking died. Or left Wil. I dunno,"

"Well, we can stop her from dying, at least," Phil said, looking down at her. She seemed to be resting more than she had been in the night- she'd been restless and her fever had spiked terribly, despite the sheer amount of milk and water that Phil was giving her. "Can't say much for the other,"

"Yeah, well, if Wilbur was here, maybe he wouldn't need to worry about her divorcing him," Tommy said, spinning Fundy around to face him, "Isn't that right Fundy? Your father is being a bitch, innit he?"

Phil suppressed a smile, even though it wasn't particularly funny. He had approximately a million things he wanted to say to Wilbur- calling him a bitch was certainly among them, but Phil didn't really have anyone to blame but himself he supposed.

But it was concerning that Wilbur wasn't with his wife. The longer it went without anyone coming to look for her... the more Phil worried. Wilbur was a lot of things- angry at Phil was one of them- but he wouldn't... he wouldn't just abandon someone. Phil was almost certain

that if he'd married someone he wouldn't just leave them, especially not based on what Tommy said Wilbur had been like, after Sally.

But... he worried that he wouldn't be able to save Sally. He wasn't a fucking miracle worker, and she was very, very sick. What if she died? What if she died and Wilbur wasn't there, and she'd died, because Phil, once again, had failed his son. Wilbur would never forgive him.

And Tommy... as close as he and Technoblade were, as much progress as Tommy had made, Tommy needed Wilbur. Even if he didn't want to admit it, Tommy missed Wilbur terribly. And now... now Tommy really needed Wilbur.

Phil needed to get in contact with Wilbur.

But first, he needed to take care of Tommy.

"C'mon Tommy," Phil said, "Let's put Fundy back down- he's supposed to go down for a nap now, then you can help me start dinner- hows that sound?"

"I'm not a fucking cook," Tommy complain, but complied, packing Fundy out to the hallway, "I'm not washing any fucking dishes,"

"Hey mate," Phil said "It's part of the process,"

"Fuck you," Tommy said, as he placed Fundy down into his crib "Can you say that Fundy? Can you say fuck you to Grandpa Phil?"

"Oh fuck off," Phil said, slinging an arm around Tommy. It spoke volumes that Tommy only stiffened momentarily, before leaning into Phil's touch. He was still, however minutely, shaking. Phil was going to kill Dream himself. Techo could take a number "C'mon, we can make a cake to go with dinner if you want,"

—

Wilbur was getting nervous. Worried, perhaps was a better word. He wasn't nervous. But... Schlatt hadn't heard anything and Wilbur knew that Sally would never message him directly. But he was worried. Something was wrong. He wasn't sure that he'd inherited instincts from Phil, but it was the best guess he had as to what it felt like.

"I'm leaving," He said suddenly, slamming a potion bottle down on the desk "Schlatt, something is wrong with Sally and you know it. She wouldn't just ghost us like this,"

Schlatt, who'd been boxing up the potions to sell that night scoffed "Wilbur, chill the fuck out-"

"No, shut up man," Wilbur insisted "Sally wouldn't do it. I'm sorry that you'll have to do this by yourself, but we're almost done. You probably won't even have to brew any more potions. But-"

"I can't fucking believe this," Schlatt snapped "Actually, no, wait, I can! This is all bullshit Wilbur, but I knew, I knew it was coming! The second you started making goo-goo eyes at

Sally I knew this what happened, damn it,”

“What the hell are you talking about, Schlatt?” Wilbur demanded

“You’d- you’d fucking ruin yourself!” Schlatt snarled! “Give yourself up! You left your shitty family, or whatever because you had ambition! I saw it in you- you’re built for better things than- than giving your goals up! You could be a great man- *we* could be great!”

“I can still be great!” Wilbur shouted “I’m not giving my life up! My family- it isn’t a hindrance to me.”

“That’s bullshit and you know it. You’re throwing away all your ambition. What about all the plans we made! WE were going to do great things! We were going to be powerful,”

“We still can be!” Wilbur exclaimed “Just because I’m not an asshole who doesn’t have a heart, and doesn’t give a shit about anyone else,”

That wasn’t... necessarily true- Schlatt felt more deeply than he’d ever been willing to admit, but he stepped back like he’d been slapped. Wilbur felt a flush of vicious satisfaction, that his words struck true. They almost always did.

“Well, at least I’m not throwing my life away,” Schlatt said “So fine, leave Wilbur, but don’t come fucking crying back to me, when you decide playing house isn’t your speed,”

Wilbur pushed past him, slamming his shoulder into Schlatt’s who just laughed, ugly and bitter. It followed Wilbur all the way off the server.

—

Wilbur had spent six hours standing in line to get entrance to Hypixel. Fuck everyone with the VIP passes. Wilbur hoped that they ate shit. He wasn’t going to stand for it.

Well. Later he wouldn’t. He had to today, which was fucking bullshit. He just wanted to get to his wife. To his son.

He wanted to get to his family, especially considering it had been over three days since he’d heard from them, and far too long since he’d seen them. Wilbur’s pack was thrown over his back and his guitar over the other, and they both ached from the weight of them.

Finally, finally, however, he was handed a Hypixel pass and stepped through the portal. The vertigo only lasted a moment before he stepped out into the starling bright platform center of Hypixel. It was nearing night since he’d spent a fucking majority of his day standing in some stupid line, but the lights of the street glowed cheerfully, bordering on overbearing.

It almost felt like midday, standing in the thronging crowds at the server entrance.

Wilbur took a moment to adjust, allowing the crowds to part around him. Finally, someone slammed into his shoulder and startled him out of his reverie. They were apparently in too much of a rush to bother with a fucking apology.

“Dick,” Wilbur called, but whoever had shoved him was long gone, vanished into the crowd. Whatever, Wilbur needed to get moving anyway.

He’d long memorized the directions that Sally gave him to the rental she was staying in, but since they could hardly afford anything near the entrance or the arenas, the walk was far longer than Wilbur cared for it to be. He wasn’t out of shape, but he was concerned. He wanted to be there already. As he got away from the entrance, the houses got smaller. Shops popped up, and the crowds thinned considerably, and no one paid him a bit of mind. Which, that was fair. He was too focused on his destination to truly pay anyone else much mind either. The homes weren’t shabby, but everyone here was a worker, employed at shops or gates, unable to make it as a champion, or even a competitor, or were perhaps unwilling to try.

Maybe he’d try his hand, one of these days. He wasn’t exactly the best swordsman he knew, but the games were as much strategy as anything. Perhaps he’d do that, or perhaps he’d find a server. He didn’t need Schlatt to get his own power. He was more than capable of creating his own place, with his family, Schlatt be damned.

Finally, he made it to the address that Sally had sent him, and...

Something was wrong. Wilbur could tell. The house was oddly dim. Quiet. The shades were tightly drawn, and no light filtered around them. It was impossible to tell if the light was on in there or not.

Something was wrong.

Wilbur considered himself human- he had no hybrid traits to speak of- but something was screaming at him, from the back of his head that something was wrong. He wasn’t quite sure if that was the parental instinct or something perhaps he had gotten from Phil. some sort of inhuman, inherent knowledge.

Whatever it was had his heart in his throat as he took the front steps two at a time. He paused for a moment, debating knocking but- but something was wrong. He grabbed the handle and-

Locked. The door was locked.

That made sense, of course. Why would they leave the door unlocked? Hypixel was safe, but it was stupid to leave a door unlocked. Of course.

“Oh, hello there,” Wilbur flinched slightly, as he turned to face the older woman standing on the step next to him “Are you looking for Sally?”

This was her neighbor. Of course she knew Sally. That would make sense. His Sally- always making friends, wherever she went.

Wilbur forced himself to smile, almost automatically. “Why, yes I am, is she home?”

The woman laughed, “Oh, no, no, she hasn’t been here in days- someone swung by a couple of days ago to pick up Fundy, sweet little thing. Apparently, she collapsed or something at

work- one of her friends was taking her in,”

“Oh,” Wilbur said, his heart twisting. She’d collapsed? And hadn’t messaged him? Or Schlatt? And Fundy had been taken by a stranger. Wilbur had half a mind to scream at this woman and demand his answers, but realistically that wouldn’t do him any good. So he swallowed down the rage that this woman had let his son be taken by someone she didn’t know and pasted on his most charming smile “Is that so? Do you happen to know who it was? See, Sally is my wife and I’m just now returning from a business trip,”

“Oh!” She exclaimed, lighting up, “You’re Wilbur? Sally spoke so highly of you. It’s sweet to see how in love you are. I’m afraid I don’t know- it was some man, and who I presume were his sons? One of them was rather odd-looking, half enderman I think. Poor by couldn’t even look me in the eye. They’ve been in and out a couple of times, at odd hours, probably picking up things that Sally forgot. The key in under that potted plant if you want to go- she might’ve written a note for you. I just know she’ll be thrilled to see you,”

Wilbur was hardly paying attention by the end. He’d thought maybe, somehow, it was Phil, but that description didn’t match anyone he knew. Who had Sally? He wasn’t sure if it was worse or not, that it might not be Phil. “Thank you,” Wilbur heard himself say. He managed to wait until the woman let herself back into her home, before grabbing the potted plant. He set it off to the side snatching the key up in hands that definitely weren’t trembling.

In one deft motion, he stuck the key in the lock and swung the door open.

“Sally?” he called, “Fundy?”

But, he was met only with quiet, and something in his heart twisted.

—

The house was empty. Things were still there of course, but it was obvious that no one had been there in a few days. Wilbur’s heart twisted. Had Sally... had Sally left him?

She wouldn’t- would she? Had she gotten... he didn’t think she’d been angry with him. Her last message had just been telling him she was excited to see him when he finally met back up with them.

But the house... he could see that some of Fundy’s things were gone. His favorite blanket, the sweater of Wilbur’s he liked. Some of Sally’s things too. It was like they’d only taken a handful of necessary things and... vanished.

Had they been taken?

There wasn’t a sign of struggle but they were gone.

Wilbur wasn’t sure how long he wandered the house, opening cabinets and closets, as if he was playing some sort of fucked up version of hide and seek, except that he knew that there was no winning. He would find no one in the empty house that mocked him. Where was his family?

Why had they left him too?

Wilbur sank heavily onto the couch. He'd abandoned the flowers on the table after his first walkthrough. He didn't really remember drifting back into the main room, but he was sitting on the couch. At some point, he must've picked up one of Fundy's little sweaters. Sally had made it, so it wasn't the best quality, but it was adorable nonetheless. Wilbur gripped it tightly in one hand and ran the other through his hair, almost obsessively.

Why?

What had happened to his family?

Chapter End Notes

1) I have to admit something- I actually finished this chapter up a couple days ago. But, I didn't hold out on you guys for no reason. Today, 1/28, is the one year anniversary of this fic (chapter title taken from the same song as chapter 1 title!) I never meant for this project to get so big or take so long, but I'm not upset. This community has been nothing but kind to me, and this fic has directly resulted in me meeting one of my best friends. I appreciate all the support and love this fic has gotten, and those of you that have been here since day 1. This fic will be done before another year passes, that I can say, but cheers to another year of me writing, whatever that may bring.

2) Ok, enough sappy shit. Y'all will like next chapter, you've been waiting for it! I also plan on updating Sail Among Liars (puffy's fic in the series!) before then, so keep an eye out. Also check out the Spotify Playlist for this fic if you haven't lately! added a couple songs: <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/65tzA3GQnItkzhpJN9Qu5R?si=9679bd1bc6844e12>

3) I'm sensing the ACTUAL end of this fic (for real this time, I swear! /lh) so I'm turning the gears on what I want to write next. I may run a poll like I did with very normal human behaviour if you guys are interested.

4) That's all! I love all of you! drink water, be kind, stay safe, take a walk, call a friend. that's all for now.

i 'm hoping you'll come soon

Chapter Summary

yeah you've been waiting for this one

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

“Tubbo,” Phil called lightly and Tubbo looked up from where he’d just finished his breakfast, which, honestly? Pretty good. Tubbo liked days when Phil cooked breakfast. It wasn't every day, of course, but more often than not they came over from their house to eat whatever Phil made, just because most of the groceries got delivered there. Probably because Technoblade *paid* for them or something. Most of the grocers in Tubbo’s house Technoblade had paid for too, to be fair. Even if he didn’t exactly know about it.

Oh well.

I mean, he’d asked Tubbo to stop stealing shit. This was Technoblade...sponsoring him, to help him kick that nasty stealing habit. That’s what he told Ranboo anyway. Tommy just advocated stealing from Technoblade in general. Or stealing in general, actually.

“What’s up bossman?” Tubbo asked.

“I’ve got a quick favor to ask you today,” Phil said, “It’s.. a bit unorthodox, but I don’t think you’ll mind too much,”

Tubbo narrowed his eyes in anticipation, “Oh now you’re speaking my language, Philza. What kind of unorthodox are we talking?”

Phil grinned, wings flaring “Well, it’s not exactly breaking and entering, but it might be akin to thievery since we don’t exactly have consent but we need Sally’s comm. Unless she has it in her inventory, which I suppose it a possiblity, it’s gotta be at her house. I need you to go in there and find it,”

Tubbo grinned. Sure it wasn't exactly stealing, but it was close enough. And it was condoned so he wouldn’t even get yelled at! And it might help them get Wilbur back. Tubbo missed Wilbur too, you know. This was a win all around, honestly.

“Sure thing!” Tubbo chirped “Can I take Tommy and Ranboo with me?”

Phil’s wings twitched, and his smile tightened “If you can convince them to go, sure. I’d rather you not wander the streets of Hypixel by yourself anyway. Just.. Tommy may not want to go, Tubbo,”

Tubbo wasn't stupid, he knew that. Tommy was... it had been bad. But Tommy didn't like to talk about his emotions. Phil was fucking smothering Tommy, really. But he was trying his best. Tommy had admitted, though, last night, that he was terrified of leaving the house- that Dream would find him.

Personally, if Tubbo met Dream he'd steal his fucking knee caps.

Tommy had at least laughed at that one, but it hadn't exactly fixed anything, not that Tubbo had expected it to.

Tubbo had pretended it still be asleep when Tommy woke up from a nightmare, sobbing quietly into his pillow.

Whoever Dream was, and whatever he'd done exactly, Tubbo was going to destroy him for it one day. Hopefully with explosives. It'd worked for him before, despite the twist in his gut at the thought.

"It'd just be real fucking rude not to offer, wouldn't it?" Tubbo asked sharply. And Phil's wings flared slightly.

"Good point, Phil admitted. "Just... you be careful Tubbo. Ranboo too if he goes. Hypixel is safe, but... if you want-"

"Phil, we'll be fine," Tubbo cut him off.

Phil was smothering all of them a little bit. Tubbo got it now, stupid hybrid instincts. His horns were about to surface, but every day it seemed like his instincts got worse. Phil's had to be terrible since avian hybrids were notoriously more protective than most hybrids. It was still fucking annoying though. None of them were babies.

"I know, I know," Phil said grinning "Be careful Tubbo, alright? I don't want o have to appeal a fucking server ban on top of everything else,"

"You got it bossman, I'll do my best," Tubbo promised, saluting Phil as he hopped off his chair and headed up the stairs where Tommy, Techno, and Ranboo were holed up in the office.

"That's not fucking reassuring," Phil called after him, but he was laughing. Phil was laughing more these days, which was nice.

"Wasn't supposed to be!" Tubbo called back and grinned, even though Phil couldn't see it.

—

In the end, Phil was right, Tommy didn't want to go.

Well. He did. That much was obvious. He wanted to go but-

He was jumpy. Nervous. Even if he lied about it. Tubbo wasn't.. He wasn't hurt. Nope. Not hurt at all that Tommy was telling Technoblade and Phil shit and not telling him. That was

fine. Whatever. It was fine that apparently, he now felt safer with them.

It made sense, logically. Tubbo couldn't protect him. Phil and Technoblade could. It was fine. And Ranboo as coming with him.

Ranboo was fucking awesome, anyway. Tubbo was glad Tommy had pulled him out of that random alleyway. Ranboo was a little bit of a pushover, but that just meant he let Tubbo do whatever he wanted. He was also nice, or whatever.

"I'd... I gotta get shit done here Tubs," Tommy said casually, even though he wouldn't quite meet Tubbo's eye. "Big man shit, you understand,"

"Wow," Technoblade drawled from his side of the desk "Tommy, turning down an opportunity to steal? Never thought I'd see the day,"

"Hey!" Tommy said, rounding on Technoblade "It's not stealing, since we have permission to do it. That makes it like 87% less pog,"

"Nah, I just think you've gotten boring," Tubbo teased "Scared of a little theft Tommy?"

Tommy scoffed, offended "I'm not scared of theft Tubbo. You know that better than anyone. I'm actually a fucking amazing thief. A pog one. Brilliant,"

"Sure Big man," Tubbo said, biting back a grin. "Whatever you say,"

"Fuck off," Tommy snapped, but there was no real heat behind it.

"Well, whatever. We'll steal some sweets or some shit on our way back. Not for you though, since you've gotten boring," Tubbo said. He tugged Ranboo out of the room, and Tommy's shouts followed them all the way into the street.

—

Wilbur had spent the morning fruitlessly looking for Sally. Her neighbor wasn't in, and while he doubted she'd be anywhere nearby, he checked the local shopping district, asking anyone who knew her- lots of them did, but not a single one was of any fucking help. They either didn't even know she wasn't home or could give him approximately zero information about the supposed friends who were taking care of her.

No, that'd be too easy.

So he was going home, empty-handed. And he was going to fucking man up and get his comm out. Really. He was. Wilbur promised that to himself, as he grabbed the key out of its hiding spot. He'd put it off for too long and-

The door was unlocked.

Blood turned to ice in his veins as the doorknob turned with no resistance, swinging open quietly on its hinges.

Wilbur knew he'd locked the door. He knew it.

Why wasn't it fucking locked?

Hypixel was a safe server, and it wasn't like he could really fight off any skilled attacker, so he didn't even bother drawing his sword.

He debated calling out, but that was fucking stupid if it was an intruder. If it was Sally, she'd understand him sneaking in. Wouldn't she? Fuck. Had his house been broken into?

Or had Sally and Fundy come back? He couldn't help the traitorous hope that rose in his throat.

He stepped as quietly as he could through the entryway, rounding the corner into the living room.

Well.

It certainly wasn't Sally.

Whoever it was had their back turned to Wilbur, as they started off down the hall. A tail twitched nervously behind them, and their hair and skin both were neatly split, pure black and white. This was the bastard that the neighbor had seen with Sally.

They knew where Sally was. They had Fundy.

Wilbur took another couple of quiet steps, sword raised before he said anything. "Turn around. Slowly now. I don't want to hurt anyone,"

The stranger stiffed, but obeyed, turning to face Wilbur. Their face was younger than Wilbur expected, especially considering their height rivaled Wilbur's own. Their clawed hands wrung nervously together.

"Uh, hello?" they squeaked "Who are you? Please don't hurt me? Please?"

They sounded young too. Maybe Tommy and Tubbo's age? The thought rose unbidden and Wilbur forced himself to dismiss it. This was almost certainly who the neighbor described. This was his lead on Sally. "Well, seeing as you're the one who broke into my home, I don't really plan on putting the sword down until I have an explanation,"

"An explanation!" they exclaimed, sounding nervous "Oh, yeah, well I sure do have one of those. An explanation. Uh. Well, you see I-"

"Ranboo, are you talking to yourself again? We talked about this king, you really gotta stop doing that," The voice that came from down the hall was startling, achingly familiar, so much so that Wilbur nearly jumped in surprise. It sounded like- but it couldn't be-

Tubbo came bounding out of one of the rooms, and down the hall at a breakneck pace. "I mean, really you sound crazier than- holy fucking shit," Tubbo stopped short, nearly tripping over nothing, as Wilbur's presence finally registered.

“Tubbo?” Wilbur said incredulously as if he couldn’t quite believe what he was seeing. Which. He wasn’t sure if he was seeing this right. Fuck, he’d heard stress caused hallucinations, but he didn’t think it’d happen so soon.

“Wilbur!” Tubbo cried in response, right before he barrelled toward Wilbur. It was instinct alone that had Wilbur shifting his stance, allowing Tubbo to plow into him without hesitation.

He grunted as Tubbo practically knocked the breath out of him with the force of the hug, and found himself automatically wrapping his arms around Tubbo. Ranboo, this stranger, was here with Tubbo. Wilbur didn’t particularly care for the implications of that. If Tubbo were here... no matter what Tommy did, Tubbo was going to follow. Tommy wouldn’t give him up, even if he’d given up on Wilbur. Technoblade and Phil might not like it, but they’d probably be willing to bring him along for the ride.

He was going to have to face them, wasn't he?

“Oh!” he heard Ranboo exclaim, “So you’re Wilbur! Like, *the* Wilbur! That.. okay that actually makes a lot of sense, wow,”

Wilbur didn’t even have time to consider what *that* meant before Tubbo was talking a mile a minute. “Ender Wilbur, I’m so fucking glad to see you- holy shit you’ve got no idea! Oh, this is Ranboo, he’s great. He came from an alleyway, but he’s cool,”

“That is true, Mhm. Yep. I was living beside a trash can,” Ranboo agreed “Now I’m not, which is like, pretty cool I guess. Tubbo keeps telling people that, but I’m not sure why. He also keeps insisting that he came from a cardboard box?”

Or maybe Tubbo had come to Hypixel alone then, and found Ranboo? If Tommy was with them, then he’d be here too, right? Of course, he would be. Tommy would never let Tubbo go off with someone else if he could help it, so Tubbo must’ve been alone. Wilbur’s stomach twisted. He’d left Tubbo alone? He’d never have thought that Tommy would have abandoned him. But that’s what happened when he took up with Tehnoblade, Wilbur supposed. Fuck.

“Tubbo,” Wilbur tried to cut in, but Tubbo was practically vibrating, as he rambled on.

“And so much has happened since we’ve seen you! It’s been honestly it’s been crazy you won’t believe half the shit we’ve gotten into-”

“Tubbo, Tubbo shut up,” Wilbur snapped and Tubbo snapped his jaw shut, looking a little hurt. Wilbur felt a sharp stab of guilt, but- well- he needed to know what the fuck was happening. Where was Sally? Where was Fundy? Where was Tommy?

“What is going on? Why are the two of you here?” Wilbur asked, looking between Ranboo, who was still wringing his hands nervously, and Tubbo who had gone to stand beside him. They exchanged a look that Wilbur couldn’t quite read.

It felt a funny taste in his mouth. He had once been able to read every expression that Tubbo had.

“Well,” Tubbo said, finally looking back at Wilbur “See, funny thing is, we were actually here trying to find a way to reach you, since you’ve been ignoring our comm messages, and since Sally lives here, we figured her comm might be here,”

“You know where Sally is?” Wilbur demanded, and he hadn’t realized how close he’d stepped to them until Ranboo moved back, hunching uncomfortably “How? What’s going on?”

Tubbo and Ranboo shared another look and it was almost enough to make Wilbur want to shake them both.

“Sally is uh, one of my friends,” Ranboo supplied hesitantly “So when she just passed out, we uh, helped her. But, she um..”

“She isn’t really getting better,” Tubbo finally said bluntly, looking back at Wilbur, “Magical sickness. She overdosed on healing potions. She’s not getting worse, but not really better either,”

Wilbur swallowed hard. Magical sickness? Magic sickness was terrifying, and hard to recover from. Phil had drilled that into his head. Better to respawn from an injury, than burn yourself up with magical sickness, if you can help it. Potions were fucking dangerous.

“What about Fundy?” Wilbur asked quietly. “Where are they? Can we-”

“Fundy’s fine, bossman,” Tubbo assured him “And yeah, c’mon. Of course, you can come back! That’s all we’ve wanted, is for you to come home,”

Wilbur wasn’t sure if he felt relieved, or ill at that declaration, but he plastered on a smile. If nothing else, he could see Sally and Fundy. Tubbo wasn’t a doctor. Wilbur- Wilbur wasn’t either, but maybe he could help Sally more than two kids could. Phil had taught him the basics of fighting magical poisoning.

And there was no way that Phil would have taken a strange woman in-Technoblade probably wouldn’t have either. Technoblade would probably say it was bad for his brand or some bullshit. Tubbo had to be alone. The evidence all pointed to that- no Tommy, and too much kindness for a woman they didn’t know. Probably. Definitely. And fuck, even if they were here? Wilbur could deal with it. He would deal with it.

“Lead the way Tubbo,”

—

The whole way home, Tubbo rambled, about... well Wilbur wasn’t really listening. Tubbo either ignored him or didn’t care, because he continued to narrate, and it was only years of practice with both Tubbo and Tommy that kept Wilbur from snapping. He just wanted to see Sally. Then he’d deal with Tubbo.

Tubbo who... he looked good.

Wilbur did take a moment to look him over. He'd grown a little- not much, to be honest, but his face was full and round, there weren't really any visible scars, and his hair was longer, but well kept. His clothes were good quality, and clean.

Whatever he'd been doing, wherever he'd been, he obviously hadn't been any worse for the wear.

That didn't necessarily get rid of the guilt that was eating at him, at Tubbo's admission of how much he'd missed him, but at least Tubbo had been fine. Tubbo was always fine. It seemed like the kid always landed on his feet.

He did notice, however, that rather than toward a house in the outer rungs, Tubbo was leading Wilbur into the more central section of Hypixel housing. The houses got taller, the stores got nicer, and the crowds got thinner, as they made their way into the Champion village.

Holy shit.

Wilbur wanted to ask questions but honestly? Tubbo wasn't a champion, but if anyone could charm their way into a champion's house, it was Tubbo. He probably pulled the starving orphan bit.

He and Tommy were brilliant at it together, but even Tubbo alone was pure menace. He was a devil behind that angel face.

So he didn't question it too much, as Tubbo unlatched a gate, and led him up to the house, going in like he owned the place. He might. HE was really, really good at getting what he wanted.

"We're home!" Tubbo bellowed as he came in, and to Wilbur's left, Ranboo winced. Wilbur could sympathize. Tubbo was loud, when he wanted to be, and with an enderman's hearing, that couldn't be pleasant.

Wilbur didn't really question anything, concerned with finally seeing his son and wife again until Phil answered Tubbo's call from the kitchen.

—

Phil had been attempting to feed Fundy mashed pumpkin for breakfast and had only succeeded in getting all over both Fundy, and over himself. He was pretty sure it was even in his wings, for fuck's sake. He'd have to get Techno to preen them for him later.

He'd just wiped down the worst of the mess when Tubbo burst in the front door.

"We're home!" Tubbo shouted and Phil winced. Fuck, the kid could be louder than Tommy when he wanted to be.

"I'll be right back, alright?" Phil murmured to Fundy, who looked content to play with the spoon on his makeshift highchair.

“That didn’t take long!” Phil called, as he wiped his hands on a towel “Must’ve found it pretty quick then, mate?”

“Actually I didn’t find the comm!” Tubbo called back cheerily “I found something better,”

Phil sighed, but it was mostly fond. Though, he was a little apprehensive. There was literally no way of knowing what Tubbo had come back with as a consolation prize for not finding the comm. “Tubbo, I swear to ender, if you’ve stolen another redstone power pack-”

Phil’s light threat died in his throat as he rounded the corner, and standing between Ranboo and Tubbo was Wilbur.

“Oh,” Phil managed around the sudden lump in his throat “*Wilbur* . Holy shit,”

It took every bit of self-control he possessed not to immediately run to his son and assess him for injury, to not let him go. But, the look on his face, and the way they’d last parted, he doubted that it’d be received well.

“Told you it was better,” Tubbo said slyly, but Phil ignored him. Wilbur’s face was perfectly blank, but his eyes, as always, were expressive. Wilbur thought that he hid his emotions well, but- well, he’d never been able to hide when he was angry. Or afraid.

And now he was both. More angry than anything, it seemed, but... fuck. At least he was home.

“Hello Phil,” Wilbur said coolly, voice even and sharp. Phil’s wings jumped at the ice in his tone. He’d- he should’ve expected the cool reception, but that didn’t mean it didn’t sting. “What are you doing here?”

“What am I-?” Phil shook his head, spell finally broken. Wilbur was home, sure, but Wilbur was *pissed* . Phil swallowed down all the things he wanted to say and the argument they’d left unfinished. “Well, as to why I’m on Hypixel, that’s a long story. I’m assuming you’d rather not hear that now. But I’m here with everyone else, in short. Before anything else, I’d assume you’d see your wife and son,”

Wilbur looked briefly surprised as if he’d expected Phil to... Phil really had no idea what Wilbur expected, but Wilbur nodded stiffly. “If you don’t mind,”

And okay, yeah, there was the venom.

“Ranboo, go grab Fundy from the kitchen. Watch out, I didn’t quite get all the pumpkin off the wall,”

Ranboo nodded, looking relieved to get out of the tension. Poor fucking kid didn’t even know what happened.

“I’d never keep your family from you Wilbur,” Phil said evenly, trying not to let his warring emotions leak into his voice, both irritation and aching relief. “In fact, we’ve been trying to reach you for days about them. And for months before that,”

A muscle in Wilbur's jaw jumped, but before he could retort, Ranboo came back into the foyer, holding a squirming Fundy and Wilbur-

Wilbur's face lit up. The anger seemed to thaw like melting ice on a warm day, as he reached out, taking Fundy into his arms. "Fundy," he said almost reverently "My little champion,"

Fundy lets out a squeal of excitement, cooing in his baby babble, as Wilbur holds him close to his chest. Phil, too, felt himself melt a bit at the sight. It was one thing to know that Wilbur was a father. It was another entirely to see it. To see that love shine on his face, that Phil feels for Wilbur.

Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Ranboo tug on Tubbo's arm, pulling him into the living room, out of the way of the reunion. Tubbo started to protest, but Ranboo slapped a hand over his mouth quietly. Phil hid a grin at their antics, before turning back to Wilbur, who was murmuring softly to Wilbur.

"He's beautiful, Wil," Phil said, risking bringing Wilbur's attention back to him.

Wilbur tensed again as if finally remembering Phil was there. Apparently, though, his pride for his son outweighed his anger at Phil "He's incredible. He really, really is, isn't he?"

"Yeah mate," Phil agreed softly "Now, Sally's upstairs if you'd like to see her,"

Wilbur nodded, "She's my wife. Of course, I want to see her,"

Phil didn't miss the edge in Wilbur's voice there either but bit back his automatic report. Phil really, really didn't want to start a fight. Not now. Wilbur was here. Phil would do almost anything to keep him here.

Well, at least to keep him here long enough for Technoblade and Tommy to come home from the store. He'd finally convinced Tommy to leave the house, and he missed Wilbur coming home. The universe was having a good fucking laugh about this, Phil was sure.

"C'mon, then. She's right up here. We didn't really have an extra bedroom on hand, so I've just been sleeping on the couch downstairs, or in the office," Phil rambled, trying to fill the silence "Or I've been up with Fundy, or watching here. She's... I think she's past the worst of it, but it's concerning that she's not awake. I'm worried about how long she'd been in the danger zone, and pushed past it based on pure will alone,"

Wilbur huffed "Ender only knows. Sally's one of the strongest people I know. And the most stubborn," It was both bitter and fond, tonged through with worry. It was the voice of someone scared. Wilbur was worried.

"I'll be, uh, around, then, mate," Phil said quietly, as he paused outside the door. "I- we need to have a conversation, but take the time you need, alright? I'll keep the boys out of your hair until you're ready,"

Wilbur nodded, obviously a little uncomfortable. He also wasn't very happy, but Phil was pleased that he at least wasn't yelling. "Phil," he said quietly, almost uncertain. It was an odd

tone on Wilbur. Wilbur was never uncertain. "Is Tommy...?"

Oh. Phil hadn't even thought how it might look, Tubbo without Tommy, and no sign of him in the house. "Tommy's out at the store, with Technoblade. They'll be back soon. Tommy will be... he'll be fucking thrilled to see you, Wilbur, you've got no idea. We're all overjoyed, but Tommy's missed you like hell mate."

Relief washed through Wilbur's eyes, but something dark followed it. "Sure," he said flatly and Phil nearly startled at the tone. "I'm sure he has. Now. If you don't mind, you've helped my family captive long enough."

Wilbur slammed the door in his face, none too gently.

Phil let out a long slow breath. Fuck. Wilbur sure was back, wasn't he?

—

Tommy wasn't a pussy, and he wasn't scared.

He really fucking wasn't.

It didn't matter what Tubbo said. It was bullshit. That's why, when Phil announced that they were out of milk, Tommy insisted on going. He definitely had nothing to prove! Nope. He really didn't.

He really had had things to do earlier, and that's why he hadn't wanted to leave the house. Really. That was true! He and Technoblade had been working on translating the pages that Ranboo had worked on for them!

But he wasn't scared. He could leave the house! He was fine!

Even if he didn't exactly protest Technoblade going with him. What, it wasn't like he controlled what Technoblade did. No one controlled Technoblade, except maybe Philza.

Fuck off Tommy was a Big Man, the biggest of men and he wasn't fucking scared. Dream-Dream wasn't out to get him. Dream didn't know him yet. Someone should tell that to his fucking nightmares about exile but it was fine.

The pages they'd translated were...not great. They didn't really have anything to do with Tommy, but they brought up uncomfortable questions about why someone named Q hated Technoblade so much. It didn't take a genius to know that it was Quackity. Tommy just... really, really didn't want to talk about the butcher army yet. Or what that decision led to.

But Tommy wasn't a coward. He'd fucking man up and go outside. Dream couldn't kill him on Hypixel. Besides, Tommy was stronger now. Even though his body was younger, less scared, he was healthy. He got three meals a day, had a sleep schedule, a real training regiment, and all that bullshit.

It was far from perfect. Obviously, he wasn't exactly over all that bullshit, and Wilbur still hadn't come home, but-

But it was better this time around, in most ways.

So he could go get the fucking milk.

Technoblade had stayed within eyesight the whole time, even though Tommy had wanted to go inside alone. He needed to. He had to show that he was capable. Dream wasn't going to fucking run his life this time around. Tommy wouldn't let him.

So they got the milk and headed home.

—

Phil intercepted them at the door, and immediately warning bells went off in Tommy's head, just by the set of Phil's wings. The smile on his face was convincing, but his wings were screaming stress, and not the Fundy won't stop crying, or Tubbo's being a little shit kind either.

Technoblade noticed it too if the set of his jaw was any indication.

"Did you two get the milk?" Phil asked as if they'd have come back without it. Tommy would've walked to every store in Hypixel, or stolen it out of someone else's home before returning empty-handed. Technoblade probably would've aided and abetted, for all that he'd protest about it afterwards.

"Of course, we got the fucking milk," Tommy scoffed "We also got sweet buns for Tubbo and extra milk for Ranboo. Fucking weirdo drinks it like water,"

"Ranboo is allergic to water, mate," Phil protested with a laugh. Tommy had been ignoring that particular fact, thanks. Drinking so much milk was just fucking weird, allergies or not.

"That's good, good," Phil said, nodding, but making no move to let them into the house.

Tommy narrowed his eyes in suspicion as panic definitely did not rise in his throat. Nope.

Phil wouldn't let Dream in. Phil wouldn't. Phil said he would protect Tommy. Phil would keep him safe. Phil would keep all of them safe.

"Phil, are you gonna let me into my own house?" Technoblade asked, punctuating it with a laugh "C'mon, we've been standin' out here for like five minutes. The neighbors might start talking,"

Phil let out a huff "Sorry mate, it's just- listen. I need to tell you both something. And I need you to be calm about it, alright, don't- don't ever react, alright?"

"Phil that is like, so not comforting," Technoblade joked, but Tommy could practically feel the tension rolling off Technoblade. Or maybe it was his own nerves. Tommy wasn't some fucking empath, he didn't know. And this was.. So unlike Phil?

"Fucking spit it out, old man," Tommy grumbled.

“Alright,” Phil said, “Alright. Wilbur is here. In the house. Tubbo and Ranboo brought him home while you two were at the store,”

It was a good thing Technoblade had insisted Tommy put the milk in his inventory because if he’d been holding it, he was pretty sure it would be shattered on the ground. Technoblade was saying something to Phil, but Tommy didn’t really give a shit.

Wilbur was here. Finally. After fucking months.

“Let me in,” Tommy demanded, interrupted “Fucking- let me by Philza,”

“Wilbur’s still up there with Sally and Fundy-” Phil started,

“Phil, Phil, listen,” Tommy said, “I genuinely do not give a shit. If Wilbur wants to kick me out he can sure fucking try, but if you don’t let me in the house, I’ll fucking bite you,”

“Yeah, can confirm, he’s tried to bite me in training before,” Technoblade joked. Mostly. Tommy had tried to bite him once, like three months ago and the bitch wouldn’t let it go.

Phil hesitated, before stepping aside. “Well. He got like twenty minutes, so honestly, go for it. I can’t stop you,”

Phil probably could stop him, Technoblade *definitely* could, if he really wanted to, but Tommy just shot past them both, not even bothering a thank you. It didn’t fucking matter.

Wilbur was back. Wilbur was home.

Tommy’s heart pounding so he took the stairs two at a time, skidding to a halt at the top as he nearly crashed into-

“Wilbur!”

Tommy froze for a second, as did Wilbur. It looked like Wilbur had just put Fundy down in his crib behind him. Wilbur looked startled to see Tommy. Tommy... hadn’t quite thought this out.

He’d been so happy to have real Wilbur back, when he first woke up, someone that was at least safe. Safe enough so that Tommy didn’t fear him, as viscerally as he’d feared Technoblade and Philza, at least. Now, Tommy still didn’t fear him, but it was easier to see the similarities between Wilbur now and the one in Pogtopia.

Tommy, for a second, didn’t know what to do, and apparently neither did Wilbur. More emotions than Tommy cared to think about flitted through Wilbur’s eyes. He was still more expressive than Tommy had seen him in a long time.

“Tommy,” Wilbur said finally, sounding almost surprised. “What are you-oh,”

Tommy slammed into Wilbur, wrapping him in a hug. He wasn’t letting Wilbur finish whatever stupid fucking sentence he was going to say, because Tommy didn’t care. He could

deal with the actual ramifications of this shit later. He was just- he was just happy Wilbur was home.

“I’m going to beat the shit out of you,” Tommy muttered into Wilbur’s shoulder. He still hadn’t quite reached the height he was in L’manburg, but it was closer. Wilbur, for his part, only hesitated for a split second before returning the hug. “I’m going break your stupid nose, and punt you into the nearest void,” Tommy threatened again.

Wilbur laughed a little bit and Tommy couldn’t quite tell what Wilbur was thinking, but honestly, he didn’t give a shit.

He was also definitely not crying. Fuck off. He’d used up his crying allotment and then some in the last few months. He needed to get his shit together, because it wasn’t very pog of him, how much he was fucking crying. That wasn’t big man shit.

Tommy knew that in a few moments he’d have to let go. Wilbur still hadn’t said anything and- and there was so much shit that they’d have to talk about. But if he held on for just another second, to remind himself that Wilbur was real and solid, and home, well, that’s Tommy’s fucking business and no one else’s.

—

They didn’t talk about shit after that. Mostly because Fundy started screaming, and Technoblade showed up, and Phil was also there, and everyone was being loud so Wilbur ended up snapping and hiding himself in Sally’s room, but Tommy didn’t really get a chance to talk to Wilbur.

And Tommy definitely didn’t flee the house, heading back to their own for lunch, dragging Ranboo and Tubbo with him, because fuck that. He’d go back, definitely, but he didn’t want to be around any of that true love shit, even behind closed doors.

It was fucking gross.

~~Tommy definitely didn’t have a minor freak out in the bathroom. Nope.~~

—

The rest of the day was pretty fucking awkward, to be honest.

Once the excitement of Wilbur being home had worn off they were all left with pretty much no idea what to do. Sally was too sick to risk moving- or at least that’s what Philza insisted. Tommy wasn’t sure if that was true or not, but he wasn’t going to argue something if it meant keeping Wilbur around.

Wilbur and Phil had already had a stilted argument about it while Tommy and Ranboo pretended that they couldn’t hear it from the living room. Tubbo was sleeping at the time since his sleep schedule was even more shit than Tommy’s used to be. Tommy wished he’d slept through it. At least Ranboo had been there, which, how fucking sad was that? He was dependent upon *Ranboo* for company? What had his life come to?

Wilbur stormed out of the kitchen and hesitated in the living room for a split second, but before Tommy could even figure out how to start any conversation, he'd fucking taken the steps two at a time. Tommy definitely wasn't a little hurt by that. Fuck off Ranboo.

So yea, it was awkward as shit. Tommy's nightmares hadn't exactly fucking improved, after facing Dream again, so he was exhausted from the day before, and Wilbur wasn't... he wasn't exactly helping. He'd only been home, what, maybe six hours? And while his mood swings weren't as bad as they once had been, Tommy was walking on fucking eggshells and it felt too much like Pogtopia.

That wasn't great for his nerves either.

So Tommy wasn't exactly having a great time, sue him. His two choices were hide in his own house, which wouldn't really work, because it was fucking boring, and he couldn't even use the excuse for the translation, because all that shit was kept in the main house, and Tubbo wouldn't stand for Tommy holing himself up forever (and Tommy didn't exactly want to be holed up. He was a big man and he hated being restrained. It pissed him off)

But, if he hung out in the main house, Wilbur and Phil were... they weren't fighting really, but it was tense. Besides the one fight, Wilbur had mostly just been polite and made smart ass comments. It is funny but also... Tommy didn't really want to get in the middle of it and accidentally piss one of them off.

On the other hand, Technoblade and Wilbur were openly hostile half the time. Technoblade had basically hidden in his room and hadn't come out, even after dinner.

Of course, with the championship sneaking up on them there was training as an excuse. It was less than a week until he and Tubbo were supposed to compete in the first round, so he needed to leave the house and train.

But Dream was out there.

Dream had no reason to be after him- he'd whispered that much to Tubbo, last night, after waking up from a nightmare about- you guessed it- exile. That didn't convince his stupid fucking brain of that, though. Sure Tommy had gone to the store, but that was with Technoblade there, and Technoblade couldn't always be there. That was bullshit. Tommy had to be his own fucking person. He was his own person. Fuck Dream.

And okay, part of the problem was that he hadn't exactly told Wilbur about what was happening yet.

Fuck off. It was... hard to explain. Technoblade and Philza barely believed him, and they literally saw Karl. What if Wilbur didn't believe him? And it had literally been only a few hours. Tommy was still in shock from that. Also, he'd literally aced fucking Dream the day before. He wasn't exactly on top of his game. He just wanted to sleep for approximately twenty years or some shit. Or maybe just. Go back. To when Tommy wasn't sure. He'd apparently already fucked up the literal chance to do that already.

He wasn't even sure Wilbur was going to stay and- and maybe that was better. Maybe Wilbur would stay far away from the Dream SMP until it was safe. Until Tommy had taken care of that shit and could be free of it. Tommy wouldn't want Wilbur to get dragged into it.

But Wilbur... fuck Tommy didn't know what to *do*. Wilbur was his brother and Tommy wanted nothing more than to talk to Wilbur like he always used to, but he hadn't been able to do that with Wilbur in so long, even before the time travel bullshit, he wasn't sure he knew how to.

—

It was getting dark, and Tubbo had roused from his nap to come back to the main house. Tommy wasn't exactly sure why they were all there- Technoblade was still holed up in his room, Wilbur was in Sally's room and Phil was obsessively sorting inventory in the basement. It wasn't like there was anything to do.

But, even though Wilbur wasn't really around, Tommy didn't exactly want to leave. Tubbo didn't either and had bullied Ranboo into staying.

"Listen," Tubbo said "All I'm saying, is that if Phil would just let me get a little more redstone, I'd be able to-"

"No," Ranboo cut in "No, you already nearly burnt my tail off with your last redstone invention. I'm begging you not to do this Tubbo,"

"Okay, but consider," Tubbo said "It'll be fun."

"I'm- I am in literal danger!" Ranboo exclaimed. "Tommy, c'mon, tell Tubbo not to,"

Tommy hummed thoughtfully. He wasn't even sure how the argument started, but it was easy to get caught up in "I mean, what sort of incentive do I have, Ranboo? I mean it's not particularly tempting to take your side,"

"See, Tommy agrees with me bossman!" Tubbo crowed

"Ah, slow down there king," Tommy warned "I didn't say I was on your side. I said that Ranboo hadn't convinced me. I need to know who has a better offer,"

"I can offer explosions, probably," Tubbo said immediately "If not at least a little bit of fire,"

"That's very tempting Tubbo, a solid offer. Ranboo, can you compete?" Tommy asked.

Ranboo looked panicked for a second "Uh, I won't yell at you about the stupid nicknames for a day?"

See now, part of the fun of calling Ranboo fucked up versions on his name was getting him riled up. However, it would also be fun to watch Ranboo squirm for a day or so.

"Sorry Tubbo," Tommy said, hanging his head "Ranboo won this one. You gotta be more careful around Ranboo's tail, or whatever,"

Tubbo scowled “Traitor!” he shouted, jamming his foot into Tommy’s side.

Before Tommy could defend his honor (he wasn't a traitor- he simply always takes the best deal), someone clattered down the stair. Tommy paused and it was- oh. It was Wilbur.

“What the hell are you three arguing about?” Wilbur asked, he looked caught somewhere between irritation and maybe a little bit of amusement. Tommy took that as a good sign. Tubbo must've too, because he perked up,

“Wilbur! I’m being ganged up on!” Tubbo cried “And Tommy’s trying to tell me what to do! Which he can’t,”

“Fuck you, yes I can,” Tommy argued “I’m taller, bitch,”

Tubbo scowled at him “Well I’m older,” Tubbo argued.

“Well,” Ranboo said, “Actually I think Tommy would be older if you count- hey!” Tubbo had realized what Ranboo was saying just as Tommy did- he was just closer to him, so he’d slapped a hand over his mouth.

“We already established that didn’t count, big man,” Tubbo said with a forced smile

“Yeah,” Tommy said and hoped he didn’t sound nervous “Don’t bring that shit up, boob boy,”

Ranboo’s eyes widened, as he realized what he almost said. “Oh, yeah,” he said, removing Tubbo’s hand from his face “My bad. Just uh. Memory issues. Yep. Silly me,”

Wilbur didn’t look convinced. “What the hell was that about?” Wilbur asked, and Tommy cringed a little “I-okay, whatever. Just, fucking whatever. I’m not even going to-”

Wilbur threw his hands up, and turned around, going back up the steps.

“Sorry,” Ranboo said quietly “I just got caught up. I forgot he didn’t know.”

Tommy huffed, crossing his arms, but he wasn't really mad. “It’s alright, Ranboo. Fucking- I’m not mad. It happens,”

“Well... you still can tell me what to do,” Tubbo said.

Tommy took the easy out

—

A little later, after Ranboo and Tubbo went home, Tommy escaped back to the roof. It wasn’t exactly a secret spot anymore, (and hadn’t been in a long time) but he didn’t want to keep Tubbo up, and every time he closed his eyes, all he saw was Dream, or Pogtopia Wilbur, and neither of those were exactly fucking restful images. And the houses were just fucking tense, even at night. Tommy couldn’t fucking take it. He wasn’t ready to really leave, but he couldn’t stand the atmosphere in the damn houses.

It had only been a few hours but it seemed like Wilbur coming back hadn't exactly been what he'd wanted it to be. Nothing ever was.

"Thought I might find you here," Tommy just flipped Philza off as he clambered onto the roof.

"What are you, a fucking mind reader?" Tommy snarked, though he wasn't really mad "Claiming to be omniscient or some shit?"

Phil snorted as he settled in beside Tommy. "Not hardly. You're just not exactly quiet when you go up here. Sounds like a fucking herd of sheep.

Tommy scowled, finally, turning to look at Phil "You're just now fucking telling me this?" He'd always assumed it was some sort of lucky guess that they found him, especially at first.

Phil shrugged "I figured that you needed to at least think you were being sneaky. Thought you might be less likely to run away if you had that,"

Tommy finally turned to look at Phil, who was lounging on his back. You couldn't really see the stars in Hypixel, and Tommy missed them. Even on the DSMP they'd never gotten so big you couldn't see the night sky. Phil was staring up though like he could see anything but a dim moon through the murky sky.

"You don't think I'll run now, or some shit? Because of Wilbur?" Tommy pressed.

Phil shrugged "I mean, sure, Wilbur probably. But I haven't *really* been concerned about you running after you dragged Ranboo home that day. Which, you never did tell me why you fucking ran off from us that day,"

Tommy huffed. "People were talking about Dream," Tommy admitted "I...my brain got all twisty or some shit, needed some space. It was pure fucking luck that I ran across Ranboo. It wasn't any great plan. Once I found him, I wasn't going to *leave* him there and shit."

He leveled a glare at Phil, daring him to complain about Ranboo. Ranboo might be an annoying bastard, but he was Tommy's friend, and Phil wasn't allowed to slander him.

"Course not mate," Phil agreed. "I'm glad you brought him back. He's a good kid,"

Tommy laughed, and it was only a little bit bitter, which was kind of a win, honestly. Phil should be so fucking grateful. "Yeah, you thought that the first time around too, Actually, you and Technoblade liked Ranboo a hell of a lot more than you liked me, there at the end,"

"Tommy-." Phil started, sounding pained and Tommy rolled his eyes. Not this shit again.

"No, it- it's not fucking like that," Tommy said, cutting him off "I'm not- it's fine. Ranboo was, *is*, one of my best friends. I'm not going to be jealous of him or some shit, I don't need to hear your speech again,"

Tommy still hadn't quite worked up the courage to explain exactly why. It was- it was fucking stupid. Because he believed all Phil's bullshit. For once, he... did. He trusted Phil. and

Technoblade. As much as he hadn't wanted to. As much as it had surprised him, he'd realized that he trusted them.

Maybe they were family again. Or at least trying.

But he couldn't shake the feeling that if they found out. if they knew about his betrayal, even if it hadn't happened yet, they'd be angry again. He was scared because now- now it'd be fucking worse. It'd be worse than the first time, if they were so angry they kicked him out.

It probably wouldn't happen. Why would they give a shit about the war that wouldn't even happen? But it was the principle of it. Technoblade loved his principles, and ultimately, ultimately, whatever Technoblade did, Phil would follow.

But... Technoblade had stayed with Tommy so far. And Phil had paid Puffy, even without knowing her. He'd trusted that Tommy trusted her. Wilbur didn't trust him though. The realization tasted bitter, like the coffee Technoblade insisted on drinking (what a heathen).

"Wilbur isn't exactly happy to be here anyway," Tommy grumbled "Sometimes he treats me like normal, sometimes he- fuck it's like he doesn't even want to talk to me. It feels like we're back in fucking Pogtopia, when Wilbur was batshit crazy,"

"I don't think Wilbur is crazy," Phil said gently "I think he's- he's upset Tommy. Mostly at me and Techno, I think. You're just caught in the crossfire,"

Tommy scoffed. He was really fucking good at that. "Yeah whatever, but he's pissed at me,"

"I don't think he is. I think you need to talk to him Tommy," Phil said quietly "You need to just... have a conversation with him,"

"Have you?" Tommy snapped back.

Phil raised his hand in surrender "Hey mate, I know. I'm not perfect Tommy. I'm trying. I just think Wilbur will be most receptive to you and Tubbo, rather than me since I don't really think he's mad at you. But, he's not even been home a whole, and he's worried about Sally. He's probably fucking confused,"

"What, do you want me to just lead with the whole fucking time travel thing?" Tommy snapped, wrapping his arms around himself "Fuck off,"

"I meant just talk to him," Phil said vaguely.

Tommy scoffed, but Phil was, unfortunately, right. Fucker. Wilbur liked to isolate. It's what he did when he was president, and it only got worse in Pogtopia. Tommy had been the only one trying to connect with Wilbur then. It hadn't been enough, of course, it fucking wouldn't be, but this wasn't Pogtopia. He had to remember that. But Wilbur tended to isolate. To push people away when he was angry. Tommy wasn't going to let the bitch push him away,"

"You've gotta talk to him too," Tommy finally said "Of course I will, Wilbur's my brother, but you've gotta fucking try to Phil,"

“I will,” Phil promised, and for some reason, Tommy believed him “We’re going try with Wilbur like we tried with you. We’ll get there.”

Tommy sighed. He wanted to believe Phil. And Phil had made good on his last several promises, hadn’t he? “I fucking hope so,”

He and Phil stayed on the roof a while longer.

Chapter End Notes

1) sorry it's been like a month. life is kicking my ass so i've been exhausted and have approximately 0 energy. I also had this chapter 90% finished for two week but kinda hated it. I'm still not happy with it, tbh, but I'm tired of staring at this document. so like. sorry if it's not as good as usual. next couple chapter will be fun! This one just took up more space than I anticipated and we didn't get the actual resolution bc I wanted to examine Tommy's feelings and Wilbur's tendency to avoid. Also note that the entire chapter takes place in the span of very few hours so everyone is overwhelmed.

2) Fic vote fic vote fic vote: <https://forms.gle/gkthHjCQm8npDfTr5> Tell me what to write next I had making decisions

3) I'm also about to post a chapter in the puffy fic that I would recommend reading!

4)That's all. Love you guys. Be kind, be good, hug someone, drink water, eat a snack, get some sleep. I'm about to eat my favorite meal I treat myself to once a week, so you guys should do the same! <3

Oh please, I can't be who you need me to be

Chapter Summary

(In which the author has returned)

Chapter Notes

Alright, new ground rules folks. This is to protect my mental health so: No comments on spelling mistakes or how I choose to write the story. If you're coming to complain about shit, then turn around.

Now, I will say, last year I was getting some hateful comments/comments about certain aspects of this story that lead to the note at the top. Listen, I get it. This isn't everyone's cup of tea. There are probably aspects of this story I would do differently if I started it now, and I get it. But like, ya'll. This story is not my entire life. I didn't even plan on taking it this far. I'm just freewheeling at this point. If you don't like the story, just leave. I don't need to know about it. I'm not saying this to be mean, but for my own mental health, you know?

And in terms of grammar and shit? yeah, I can't spell. I also don't have the bandwidth to always edit this as closely as I could. I try, but I miss stuff.

This is not directed at 99% of ya'll, so don't worry about it, I love you.

See the end of the chapter for more [notes](#)

Wilbur wasn't stupid. He knew when he was being lied to.

And everyone- *everyone* was lying to him. He wasn't sure what they thought, exactly. That he wouldn't notice it? That he wouldn't notice how they all shared looks, and minced words when he was in their presence, dancing around some greater truth that they couldn't deign to share with him. Wilbur didn't even pretend he understood whatever conversation that Tommy, Tubbo, and that Ranboo kid had been having, the one that they were so desperate to abandon at the first sign of actually saying anything that meant... anything, once Wilbur came around!

It was strange. It wasn't what Wilbur had expected at all. He'd left something that wasn't a family. He certainly hadn't expected to come back to one, or, at least something far closer than it had been before. Something closer to family than they'd had in years,

Had he been the problem all along then?

Maybe that made sense- Niki And Charlie had split at the first signs of trouble, and Schlatt seemed to tolerate Wilbur's presence only when drunk for the last few weeks they'd spent together. Sally and Fundy were the only ones he hadn't either driven off or driven to alcoholism.

And even then, apparently, they'd been taken in by Phil. Wilbur veritably hadn't expected that. Phil said that it was a coincidence, that it was purely out of the goodness of his heart, and that he would've helped her anyone. Wilbur smelled bullshit on that, but couldn't exactly argue it since it was his word against everyone else, when Technoblade, Tommy, tubbo, and even RAnboo chorused agreement, though Wilbur had a suspicion that Ranboo would've agreed to anything that was asked of him.

It infuriated WWilbur but who could blame the kid? If his story was true, they practically pulled him off the streets of Hypixel, and gave him a home, for no other reason than Tommy had asked. Of course, the kid would want to follow their every order like a good little soldier.

That didn't mean it didn't make Wilbur want to pull his hair out.

At least he had Fundy, and Sally, who helped keep him sane.

Fundy was babbling now, not quite words, but sounds and squeals, and Wilbur swore that he'd grown exponentially since the last time that Wilbur had seen him. He knew they said that babies grew fat, but still Fundy seemed to be growing faster. Wilbur wondered if that was in his head or not.

He wasn't so good at telling these days, apparently.

"Morning Sally," Wilbur whispered, pressing a kiss to her forehead. She'd been waking up briefly, but mostly in dazed spells that didn't last long, before slipping back into sleep quickly. As much as Wilbur hated to admit it, he was grateful that Phil had found Sally. She wouldn't have survived this otherwise. Wilbur would've been on an entirely different server and...

Fuck. It didn't do him any good to think about it, but the guilt was eating him up. He peered into Fundy's crib as he headed out the door. Fundy was sleeping quietly and Wilbur didn't want to disturb him. At least one person in their little family was getting good rest.

Outside of the room that he'd holed up in, the house was bustling with activity. Wilbur could hear the shower running, and from downstairs, at least three distinct voices, Tommy, Tubbo, and Ranboo, chattering loudly. Philza was probably down there too, especially considering the enticing scent of breakfast that was wafting up the stairs.

Wilbur debated slipping out the front door and taking a walk, but he was hungry. Besides, Phil had said this was Wilbur's home too if he wanted it, and while Wilbur didn't exactly believe him, he was at least going to push as many buttons as he could before he was kicked out.

Downstairs, Wilbur entered the kitchen with a bit of trepidation, only because he could hear Tubbo and Tommy arguing over something, and Ranboo's attempts at mediation. It was a good-natured argument, Wilbur decided, but Tommy and Tubbo both had a penchant for throwing shit.

“Morning Wilbur,” Pihl called from by the stove, where he was in fact making breakfast, “Grab a seat!”

Tommy and Tubbo, who appeared to be wrestling over a singular fork paused, and Tubbo seized the opportunity to snatch it from Tommy. Wilbur gave them a wide berth and took a seat next to Ranboo, who gave him an almost apologetic smile. “Good morning,” Ranboo said quietly and Wilbur nodded in response.

“No!” Tommy cried, reaching for the fork Tubbo was holding over his head vigorously “I need it Tubbo! ”

“I do too!” Tubbo shot back, leaning as far away from Tommy as he could without falling out of the chair “Actually, I think I need the lucky fork more than you do since-”

Tubbo cut himself off, glancing over at Wilbur for a second “Since you’ve had more training,” Tubbo finished lamely. Even Tommy cringed at the awkward segue, but Tommy gave in, collapsing into his seat.

“Fine, whatever,” Tommy muttered, pouting.

Enraging secrets aside, it was a pretty funny scene and Wilbur couldn’t help but ask. “Alright, you two. What’s the deal with the fork? It’s just a fork”

Ranboo groaned beside him and buried his face in his hands “Oh now you’ve done it”

Tommy gasped “How could you say that?”

“Hearsay!” Tubbo shouted, jumping up in his seat “Heretic!”

“Boys,” Phil admonished from the stove “Fundy is sleeping upstairs. Can you please be a little less shouty?”

“Sorry Phil,” the two of them chorused and Tubbo even dropped back into his seat

“Anyway,” Tommy continued “It’s the lucky fork. Whoever uses it will have the best luck that day in competitions,”

“It’s true,” Technoblade chimed in, as he swept through the kitchen, damp hair pulled back into a loose braid. “Which Is why I’m takin’ it.”

“Hey!” Tubbo protested, but it was too late, as Technoblade deftly snatched it out of Tubbo’s hand “No fair, dickhead!”

Technoblade shrugged, “L. Get good Tubbo, then maybe you can have the fork. Besides, I need it since I have my first elimination round today,”

“Yeah, like you aren’t going to eliminate them all, fork or not,” Tommy grumbled “That’s no fair, Techno,”

“Yeah, well, shoulda held onto the fork better,” Technoblade said “You two can fight over it tomorrow when it’s your turn to compete,”

“Compete?” Wilbur piped up. Honestly, he was... fuck it, he was a bit *jealous*. How could Technoblade, the guy who’d barely wanted anything to do with their family, suddenly be so comfortable around everyone? He acted like... he acted like a brother, now. Wilbur didn’t get it.

Everyone started as if they’d forgotten he was there, which was fucking typical.

“Oh!” Phil exclaimed, “Tommy and Tubbo are competing in Bedwars Duos in the champion tournament tomorrow!”

“Yeah, and we’re gonna kick ass,” tubbo exclaimed, splaying his hands over the table “We’ve been training for weeks!”

“We’re the dark horse team,” Tomy chimed in with a glint in his eye that always meant trouble “People aren’t gonna see us coming! It’s gonna be cool as hell!”

“They are pretty good,” Ranboo added hesitantly “I mean, I don’t know that much about Bedwars, but it seems like-”

“Aww, Ranboo gave us a compliment,” Tubbo cooed, making kissy faces at him from across the table. Tommy faked gagging at the sight and Phil chuckled.

Ranboo’s face fell into something pained “I hate this family. I hate it here. You’re all the worst. Just put me back out on the street.,”

“Nah, you don’t mean that boob-boy,” Tommy said with a scoff.

“I really, really do,” Ranboo said, though he was smiling ever so slightly “Wilbur, please, please end my suffering,”

Wilbur felt vaguely surprised at being addressed but raised his hands in mock surrender. “Hey, listen I’m not trying to get in the middle of this fork argument-”

“Yeah right,” Technoblade scoffed from where he was leaning against the counter “When have you ever tried to stay out of an argument Wilbur?”

“How would you know,” Wilbur snapped back, almost without thinking, “It’s not like we had much of a chance to hang out in the last, what, six years?”

The room fell silent, briefly, at Wilbur’s outburst, and Technoblade’s face darkened. “It’s not my fault that you left after I came back.”

“Yeah, well, there’s a reason I left! And it’s the same one as to why I’m losing my mind here. You’re all- fuck- you’re all keeping secrets from me! And I don’t know why. What the fuck

can't I be trusted with, huh?" Wilbur said, voice crescendoing into an almost shout before he took a deep breath.

"We're not lyin' about-" Technoblade started, but Wilbur wasn't having it

"Og yeah!" Wilbur shouted, motioning to all of them. He nearly knocked Ranboo in the head, but couldn't quite bring himself to care, as his heart pounded. IT had only been days here, but he couldn't take it anymore. "Then why won't any of you finish a conversation around me? I'm not- I'm not stupid, you know!"

"I don't- "

"Technoblade," Phil broke in, voice bordering on the stern as he cut off the argument "Why don't you take Tubbo and Ranboo out for breakfast."

Technoblade looked for a moment like he might protest, but he pushed off the wall. "C'mon. We can get better stuff down the road than Phil can cook anyway. Don't let his dad demeanor fool you" he said gruffly to Tubob and Rabboo, who followed suit. Tubbo squeezed Tommy's shoulder as they left, and Ranboo mouth something that Wilbur couldn't quite make out. A moment later, the front door slammed shut

Tommy himself was sitting in his seat, jaw locked, eyes straight ahead, looking at no one, but specifically away from Wilbur.

"Why'd you stop the argument PHil? Wilbur snapped, as he turned to face Phil, who'd turned the stove off and looked concerned. Probably only because Tehnoblade was getting insulted, or something.

"Because it isn't productive," Phil said, then glanced at Tommy. "And... it's because you're right."

"Phil!" Tommy exclaimed, eyes snapping over to him, "What the fuck man?"

Phil looked pained for a second but shook his head "No, Tommy. You've kept enough secrets. We've been patient, but you gotta start being honest,mate. With *everyone* . About Everyhting. We talked about this, remember.,"

Wilbur wondered what the fuck that meant, exactly, but Tommy apparently knew.

Tommy looked angry, and a touch.. panicked, as he looked between Phila dn Wilbur "Fine," Tommy snapped eventually "Fine, I'll... fine.

"Good," Phil said with a smile that was obviously forced. He ruffled Tommy's hair "I'm going with Techno and the boys. You two are welcome to eat what I fixed or send me a message and we'll bring you something back,"

Phil didn't wait for a response before leaving. A moment later, the door slammed shut, and Tommy and Wilbur were sitting in the kitchen, in silence.

Wilbur was still standing, for some reason. He could quite bring himself to sit.

“So,” Wilbur snapped “Are you just going to sit there?”

Tommy huffed, now looking back down at his empty plate “I’m thinking, Wilbur,”

“About what?” Wilbur snapped, temper flaring again. “About what lies you’re gonna tell me too? What, or are you trying to think about how you’re going to tell me that you replaced me with tEchnoblade?”

“I didn’t-” Tommy started, but Wilbur was on a roll.

“Or maybe Phil isn’t man enough to kick me out, and you want me to leave-”

“Wilbur, listen-”

“Or is it that you’re a murderer like Technoblade now, huh, are you-”

“I’m from the fucking future, Wilbur!” Tommy shouted, slamming his hand on the table, startling Wilbur into silence.

They were both frozen. Tommy felt like he couldn’t breathe, as he watched Wilbur’s

“What?” Wilbur managed after a split second of silence that felt like a fucking eternity. Already, Tommy wanted to take it back, the look on Wilbur’s face was, fuck it wasn’t a good look, but Tommy couldn’t quite read it. “Sorry, can you run that one by me again?”

Tommy jutted his chin defiantly, despite the hammering of his heart “The future. I uh. I died. Three times. Woke up here. Well, not here, but in the past. It’s a long fucking story, but yeah. The future. That’s- that’s what was wrong with me. What *is* wrong with me, I guess? I didn’t exactly have a great fucking time.”

Wilbur blinked once, twice, and sat down hard, collapsing into a chair like a puppet whose strings got cut. Tommy could see the emotions playing across his face, and warp speed, but Tommy had gotten good at reading Wilbur’s emotions, from his highs to his lows. That expression was dangerous because it meant he could go either direction and Tommy wasn’t sure what to brace himself for.

And still, Wilbur said nothing, just staring at him. Tommy started to fidget.

“Do you believe me?” Tommy asked after a few moments of terrible silence. His tone was harsher than he meant for it to be, and Wilbur’s mouth tightened almost imperceptibly. Fuck. Still, he didn’t say anything, just regarding Tommy with an expression that made Tommy want to apologize and take it all back. But he wasn’t going to do that. He wanted- he needed Wilbur ot to believe him. Wilbur was back and Phil was right. He needed to tell the truth.

“What?” Tommy pushed, temper flaring “Are you just gonna- gonna sit there and fuckin’ look at me?”

“What do you want me to say?” Wilbur said, finally, voice flat. “what the fuck am I supposed to say to that Tommy? I’m sorry, time travel isn’t exactly something I’ve exactly had time to come to terms with in the last minute and a half!”

“Yeah, well I didn’t exactly get that luxury either!” Tommy snapped “Sorry I didn’t exactly know how to handle waking up from a coma to see my dead brother in the room with me,”

Wilbur’s face paled, suddenly. The anger wasn’t gone, but it was momentarily cast aside at the horror on his face “What?”

“Oh, so now you believe me?” Tommy snapped, then flinched at his own tone “Sorry I- Yeah. You died three times. Three fucking times. War isn’t exactly conducive to staying alive, you know,”

“War?” Wilbur pressed “What kind of war?”

“Doesn’t matter,” Tommy said because he didn’t want to get into L’Manburg right now. Ever, preferably, though he knew that probably wasn’t an option. “But does this mean you believe me?”

Wilbur sat back in his chair, and ran a hand through his hair “Fuck, I- I guess? I mean, yeah. Why not? I’ll work time travel into my worldview. It would... explain a lot.” Wilbur hesitated, considering something for a moment, “Is that why you jumped out that window?”

Tommy snorted. He’d almost forgotten that particular aspect of his fiasco, it had been so long ago, especially with all the other shit he’d been dealing with “I fucking panicked, alright? Phil and I... weren’t on the best terms in the future, but that shit is sorted now,”

Mostly. Tommy ignored the pang of guilt, that he was still lying to Phil and Technoblade. He still hadn’t told them the whole truth, had he? He should’ve but-

This wasn’t about them now. This was about Wilbur. Wilbur, who apparently believed him now. Wilbur, who was finally here.

“And mostly we’ve been trying to get you to fucking come home,” Tommy continued “Or at least let us know you aren’t dead or some shit,”

“Aww,” Wilbur cooed, but Tommy could tell that it was mostly a front for whatever he was actually feeling “Did Tommy miss me?”

Normally Tommy would rather cut out his own tongue than admit to Wilbur that he missed him, but fuck, Tommy *had* missed him. “Why the fuck wouldn’t I?” Tommy snapped “But it doesn’t seem like you missed us that much,”

Wilbur’s lips pressed into a thin line “I had no reason to think any of you would miss me. What, you were so buddy, buddy with Technoblade, all of a sudden,”

And there was the fucking bitterness again. Great. Tommy couldn’t find it himself to be surprised though. “Get your head out of your ass,” Tommy grouched. While Wilbur was still mostly the same as he had always been Tommy- Tommy wasn’t quite. Strange as it was, he

was... firmer. Less afraid of Wilbur leaving. He desperately wanted him to stay, of course, don't be fucking ridiculous. But-

But Tommy knew he wouldn't be alone if Wilbur left. Not like before.

"Excuse me?" Wilbur snapped, expression incredulous "Take *my* head out of my ass?

"You heard me. You're still my brother dumbass. Whatever fucking beef you and Techno have isn't really my problem," Tommy said.

It was his problem, kinda, but honestly, it wasn't like Tommy had even really had a choice and this conversation wasn't about that bullshit. "I was fucking panicking, Wilbur. I wasn't exactly having the time of my life. Technoblade was just being a bastard that wouldn't leave me alone because Phil asked him to. I was trying not to freak you out and Technoblade was following me a lost sheep or some shit, then you fucking ran off, before I'd even figured out what the fuck I was supposed to be doing,"

Wilbur stared at him for long enough that Tommy was starting to fidget uncomfortably. Wilbur was- well he was certainly more stable now than he had been in Pogtopia, so Tommy wasn't too worried about him losing his temper, but it was making Tommy nervous, alright? Fuck off. "'I-I need a minute to process all this,'" Wilbur said finally, running a hand over his face.

Tommy wasn't sure that he managed to keep his face from falling as Wilbur continued.

"I mean, time travel? I want to believe you Tommy, but shit man, I didn't even think it was possible. I just..." Wilbur got up, not quite meeting Tommy's eyes "I need a minute,"

Tommy clenched his jaw so hard it felt like his teeth were going to crack, but he didn't say anything to Wilbur as he practically fled the room. He heard the door to Sally's room shut, and Fundy began to cry, and Tommy finally tipped his head back, slumping down in the chair.

"Fuck," he muttered. *That* went well.

—

When Tubbo got home, he wasn't exactly surprised that Tommy was nowhere to be found, and that Wilbur was just sitting in the living room with Fundy. None of them were exactly forthcoming, but Tommy and Wilbur had a tendency to butt heads almost as bad as Wilbur and Technoblade, even if they didn't want to admit it.

Ranboo and Phil had gone with Technoblade since it wasn't really that long until Technoblade needed to compete, but Tubbo wanted to swing by and picky up Tommy, and hopefully Wilbur. That probably wasn't going to happen considering the look on Wilbur's face.

"Oh, hey Tubbo," Wilbur said, looking up from Fundy, who was crawling around on the floor. (side note: Tubbo didn't know much about babies, but he was pretty sure that Fundy

wasn't old enough to crawl. Or maybe he was. Tubbo hadn't actually met any babies, okay?)

"Hey Wilbur, Tubbo said, hoping that Wilbur wouldn't pick up on the hesitation in his voice. Wilbur didn't... he didn't look too upset, which was good, Tubbo wasn't exactly a fan of Wilbur's mood after he got into a fight. "I take it your talk with Tommy... well I guess he told you some stuff,"

Wilbur's mouth thinned. Ah, there it was. "Yeah, he sure said some stuff," Wilbur said in a tone that was unmistakably bitter. "Not much of it made sense though,"

"Yeah the time travel shit is wild," Tubbo agreed, leaning against the door frame.

Wilbur managed to mostly hide his jolt of surprise, but his eyes still narrowed "So you buy his story? It's crazy, isn't it?"

"You don't buy it?" Tubbo asked, "Are you fucking with me, Wilbur?"

"For once, no," Wilbur snapped, then grimaced "Sorry. I'm just- I didn't exactly expect this,"

Tubbo wasn't sure if Wilbur meant time travel when he said this, but he wasn't a therapist or any shit like that, so he just shrugged. "Well, it's true. I mean, if you think about it makes sense,"

Wilbur gave him a blank look.

Tubbo sighed dramatically "Why am I the one having to explain this?" he whined. He so didn't get paid enough for this. "Well, whatever. Tommy's not lying to you, Wilbur. Why would he lie about this?"

"I don't know," Wilbur said, "But if he isn't lying then- then I just fucking left you both for no reason,"

Tubbo shrugged "Tommy was freaking out, but he wasn't mad. You had to do your own shit, Wilbur. Just wished that you'd answered your fucking messages, so we could've freaked out a little less,"

Wilbur winced, "fuck,"

"Listen, I'm not qualified for this shit. If you want to come see Technoblade compete, come on. If not, don't, but I wanna go watch him. He'd gonna kick ass," Tubbo said. He really didn't want to watch Technoblade pound his opponent's ass into the ground. It was fun.

Wilbur ran a hand through his hair "I've fucked up,"

Tubbo shrugged "I dunno, maybe, maybe not. But I don't think it really matters. You had shit to do, and so did we. It is what it is now. But we're all here now, or whatever,"

Tubbo didn't know if Wilbur had fucked up or not- and he wasn't sure it mattered. He wasn't sure if any of this past stuff mattered, or if it was all bullshit. He wasn't qualified. At the end

of the day, he was on Tommy's side, but that didn't mean he didn't want to be on Wilbur's side too though. He just wanted all this bullshit to end.

To Tubbo's surprise, Wilbur did *actually* show up to Technoblade's competition. It was only moments before it started, but there he was, with baby Fundy in tow. He settled down beside Phil, who gave Wilbur an easy grin. Tommy had shown up not long after Tubbo got back and was sitting between Tubbo and Ranboo on Phil's other side.

Tubbo felt Tommy stiffen against his side, but Tommy chose to ignore Wilbur and cheer Technoblade on. It wasn't the best option, but at least it wasn't a fight.

With the energy of the crowd though, it was easy to forget about all the tension and just scream his fucking heart out.

At one point, he and Tommy were trying to see who could scream the loudest. Tubbo was almost certain he'd won, no matter what Tommy said, and Ranboo wasn't willing to take a side.

At the end of the day, Technoblade's opponent was competent, but Technoblade still crushed him, and the next two opponents for the first round of eliminations. The crowds gave a deafening roar when he was declared the winner.

Tubbo stole a glance at Wilbur, and even he was smiling a bit, though he was using his hands to cover Fundy's sensitive ears.

Maybe things were looking up after all.

Chapter End Notes

1. So.... not dead? Yeah I know it's been a while.
2. Little life update since we last spoke (15 months ago): Got Covid, got a mental health diagnosis, got my dream internship, questioned my sexuality, got a new car, graduated college, got a new job, and planned a huge move.
3. So, why haven't I updated? I've been busy with life, Technoblade's death fucked me up, and I'm not really into DSMP anymore. But, I do hold a fondness for this story and have always meant to get back around to it. I'm not making any promises about when the next update will be (see life update above) but at this time, I do plan on there being another one!

4. Love ya'll! Sorry if my first note came off mean, I'm just taking the tough love route these days! Setting Boundaries. Once again, this is not directed at 99% of you so dw about it. But I love you all, be kind to one another and go outside! Look at the stars and marvel that I get to see them here too! How connected we are as members of planet earth! And drink water!

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